

## ***WHAP - A Home-Learning (Homework) Survival Guide***

### Philosophical Statement Regarding Home-Learning:

At the Advanced Placement/College level, instructors can't "teach" the entire content, the volume is too great and the idea is for students to learn *how to learn independently*. Class time must be preserved to help students reach the analytical and conceptual thinking levels required of this Advanced Placement course. Whether we agree or not, this is the reality of "survival" at this level. The instructor's role is to facilitate and guide the students learning. The purpose of Home-Learning is to increase a student's comprehension of the World History AP curriculum, provide time to meaningfully interact with the World History AP curriculum, to increase retention of the World History AP curriculum, and to improve essential, academic skills such as critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Therefore, Home-Learning is important.

### How to Successfully Complete the Home-Learning:

There are three components to homework:

1. Reading
2. Outlining
3. Reflecting in Writing about the Reading

### Reading

There is no escaping this simple truism: Reading can increase an individual's knowledge base if the reader reads for comprehension. Therefore, regardless of how much knowledge a person has, reading can increase what the reader knows. After all, every book is a new frontier. While the author may present familiar facts, the author's perspective will influence the ways in which information is presented as well as what areas are emphasized. As such, there is no substitute to reading. Given an average of 26 pages per week, students must ensure that time is set aside for reading.

- The first survival rule: Create a schedule and organize your time to ensure that there is time to read for understanding, including weekends. Reading for understanding requires time and focused effort. It cannot be accomplished without adequate time or all at once.

### Outlining:

Outlining<sup>1</sup> a text ensures that the reader engages fully with the writer's ideas and increases the likelihood of a student understanding and retaining information. Most scholars believe that outlining will significantly affect a student's academic performance. However, in order for an outline to be written effectively:

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<sup>1</sup> For more about how to outline, see the "Outlining a Text" handout.

- The second survival rule:
  - 1- A student must understand the author's organization of the information, i.e. headings, subheadings, topic sentences.
  - 2- A student must thoroughly read the assigned pages.
  - 3- A student must write clearly and accurately enough of the idea so as to effectively communicate the idea and create a useful study guide for future use.

i.e. Acceptable Example of Bulleted Notes

- The caste system is a fixed system
- Birth determines status
- Inequities arise as a result of social immobility

Unacceptable Example of Bulleted Notes:

- Caste/fixed
- Birth
- Unequal

In addition, students should include "Key Points" that occur to the student as they read and outline. They can be key words or concepts or questions, but they should appear in the outline where the topic that prompted the question is located. The Key Points are written to be used later for the student to test himself or herself.

Acceptable Key Points:

Neolithic Revolution

What was the Neolithic Revolution?

Unacceptable key points:

Farming

Settled

At the end of each section of the text, or group of documents, student will write a summary. Summaries are not questions, rather they are one or two statements summarizing the most important ideas presented on that particular section of the outline.

Next a student must "gist" the section. What is gist if not a summary? The summary is simply a condensed version of what the author said, the gist is the author's point, his argument, her position if you will. Understanding the difference is a key skill in managing an AP class.

Acceptable Summary:

World historians are primarily interested in studying the world as a whole and looking for connections between regions and areas as opposed to solely focusing on one area.

Unacceptable Summary:

World historians are really interesting in their global perspective.

### FOCUS (Margin & Big Picture) QUESTIONS

These questions come in the following types: “change”, “comparison”, “connection”, “big picture” and “using the evidence”. Their purpose is to provide students opportunities to practice supporting thesis statements, thinking critically and determining their ability to comprehend the text. In the Focus Questions, students are expected to consider and respond on the right page of their dialectical journal across from the outline of the portion of the text the question references. Three column charts are especially useful for “comparisons”, timelines are especially useful for “change” questions<sup>i</sup>.

- The third survival rule: A student must take the time to think about an answer that is accurate and understandable, in written form. Clearly, organization is required to effectively write a strong Focus Question answer.

i.e. Acceptable Supporting Statements for the Neolithic Focus Questions:

- Farming allowed people to settled and support larger populations
- Food Surpluses led to specialization
- Specialization increased technological innovations

i.e. Unacceptable:

- Farms
- Extra food
- Technology

Consider the use of “mindmaps”. These are a more visual representation of information that are especially useful in seeing the relationship between and among societies, countries, trade routes, etc. They can be done freehand on paper, on an erasable white board and using software such as *Freemind*<sup>ii</sup> or *iThoughts*<sup>iii</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> A composition book is by far the best means of organizing this information.

<sup>ii</sup> [http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

<sup>iii</sup> Available at the Apple app store