The Cornell Method of Note Taking

In AP World History students will be required to read, comprehend and use college level text. The Cornell method of note taking is highly recommended. It results in more organized notes, which clearly delineate the different types of information that the students will be expected to learn. This includes writing 1) discreet facts and definitions that are tagged to 2) organizing concepts and/or questions, followed by 3) a summary of the content. Students should be able to use the notes to quickly identify key words and key concepts from a reading or lecture. The notes can easily be used as a study guide for test/exam preparation. Properly arranged, the information is easy to scan, making it easy to locate particular pieces of information. The strategy may be adapted to a number of presentation formats: homework assignments, movies, lectures, etc. In general the notes are set up with factual or descriptive notes recorded on the right two-thirds of the page, while key words, concepts and essential questions are recorded in the left hand third called the recall or question column, and a summary is recorded at the end of each section.

**Cornell or Two–Column Method of Note-Taking Guidelines:**

1. Divide the letter-sized notebook paper.

• Use loose leaf letter-sized notebook paper

• Divide the paper vertically into two columns by drawing lines from top to bottom about 2” from the left side of the page. (Roughly one-third left side, two-thirds right side)

2. Each set of notes should have the student’s name, chapter number and chapter title at the top

3. Record notes

• During the lecture or reading, record the main ideas & concepts on the right side of the page. This is the notes column.

• Rephrase the information in your own words before writing it down. THIS IS IMPERATIVE – copying the (albeit brilliant) words of Robert Strayer WILL NOT help you learn.

• Skip one line between ideas and topics.

• Avoid writing in complete sentences; use symbols, and abbreviations.

• The format or style of the notes can vary, suggestions for organizing notes are:

— Paragraph Style: For unstructured information, record notes in a paragraph style with short, telegraphic sentences & phrases.

— Topic and Ideas style: For expanded topic information, record topics and ideas.

— Sentence Style: For ideas and concepts, record notes in short sentences.

— Definition Style: For main topics and features, record definitions and explanations of words in short phrases.

4. Record Key Words, Ideas or Important/Essential Questions

• As you take notes in the right-hand column, look to see what questions those notes would help you answer. Write these questions in the left-hand column.

• Alternately, you can use the left-hand column to sort of “label” the different sections of the notes, by giving them headings or categories.

• Information in this column must be very brief, a phrase or two or a question.

5. Review, Clarify, and Summarize – Incredibly important part, NOT a throw-away.

• Stop at the end of each major section of the text. For Ways of the World, each major section is denoted by LARGE RED TYPEFACE.

* For example, Chapter Two (First Civilizations) has FOUR major sections: the first is Something New; the second is The Erosion of Equality; the third is The Rise of the State; and the fourth is Comparing Mesopotamia and Egypt.
* The last part of the chapter, called “Reflections,” does NOT get its own summary.
* At the end of each of these sections, you will write a summary, as described below.

• Review the notes in the right column and clarify any ambiguous information

• Check to see if the questions you have written in the left-hand column are adequately answered by the notes you’ve taken.

• Now, at the end of the section, write a **paragraph-length summary** of the key ideas from that section. The summary should encapsulate the “big picture” discussed in the section. It should hit on the main points and provide some sort of result or effect-oriented statement in conclusion.

6. Other Considerations - Special Sections and Instructions

• In reading your textbook (especially the first two chapters), you should come to notice a few special parts to it and may be confused about how to take notes on those sections.

• For the Prologue, even though it seems there are five major sections (since there are five sections that are titled with that large red typeface, you should simply take notes on the entire Prologue and then write ONE summary for the whole thing.

• For Part One: First Things First, the same holds true. Strayer has the book divided into six parts, each one of those parts correlating to each of the six periods or eras outlined in the College Board’s AP World History curriculum. He gives each of these “parts” their own introduction, called “The Big Picture.” The Big Picture for Part One goes from page 3 to page 7. Like the Prologue, you should take notes on the Big Picture section and write one summary for it.

• Lastly, you should realize that Strayer opens each chapter with a contemporary anecdote and some sort of introduction. While you should take some notes on them, they do not (like the “Reflections” piece at the end of each chapter) require a summary.

7. Cornell Notes Video: If you need further help doing your Cornell Notes, watch the tutorial video [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gtmq0K0xMo4&feature=youtu.be) or here: http://bit.ly/1JUySrm

Template for Cornell or Two-Column note-taking

Your Name Chapter/Section Number & Title

**Left Side: Organizing Concepts/Questions**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Right Side: Discreet facts, summaries of key information, definitions, brief narratives, telegraphic sentences**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Section Summary (NOT at the bottom of every page of notes, just at the end of each SECTION)**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_