

Tips for Studying History

1. Create a special history notebook for handouts, notes, and assignments.
2. For ten to fifteen minutes (as soon after class as possible) do each of the following:
 - a. Write down any questions you have about what was covered in class.
 - b. Write down any vocabulary you did not understand.
 - c. Reread your class notes. (*Hint: What the teacher writes on the board is usually important. Copy it down with enough explanation that you will understand what it means two weeks from now.*)
 - d. Review what was covered in class:
 1. What was the topic?
 2. What does it have to do with all of world history?
 3. Why are we studying this?
 4. How does it relate to the world today?
 5. How does it relate to you personally?
3. Each afternoon or night you should spend at least thirty minutes studying, reading, and doing your homework for history class. Proceed in the following manner:
 - a. Read your assignment utilizing the SQ3R method².
 - Step 1: *Survey*—look at headings, graphs, pictures, and tables to get a grasp of the main ideas. Look at the text questions for each section.
 - Step 2: *Question*—Change headings to questions. For example, if the heading is “Native Americans Discover America,” the question might be “Who discovered America?” The question provides you with a purpose and helps you see important points being made. Use questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how.
 - Step 3: *Read*—actively read the assignment, trying to ask and answer questions as you read. Take notes as needed.
 - Step 4: *Recite*—look away from the text and softly verbalize a summation of the section and answers to your question.
 - Step 5: *Review*—look at the headings and dark print again.
 - Step 6: *Practice*—answer the questions from your assignment without looking back in the reading. Check your text if you are not certain of your answer and jot notes in your notebook about aspects you had forgotten.
 - b. Periodically, write summaries of what has been covered in the class and in notes.
4. Ask for supplemental work if you feel uncertain about any topic or wish to explore a topic further.
5. Always approach the teacher for help or clarification—the teacher is there to assist you in your quest to learn.
6. If your grade, as well as your understanding of history, does not improve after making a conscientious effort to carry out the above suggestions, see your teacher.

²SQ3R method adapted from developments by Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago

The Chinese Approach to History

Read the selection by a twelfth-century A.D. Chinese historian. Then answer the questions below.

“ . . . you must know how to select, for if you do not know how to select, you will end up with nothing more than a vast collection of facts crammed into your memory. Hu Chieh Tzu once asked Lieh Tzu why he liked to travel. Lieh Tzu replied: “Other men travel in order to see what there is to see, but I travel in order to observe how things change.” This might be taken as a rule for history. Most people, when they examine history simply look at periods of order and realize that they are ordered, periods of disorder and recognize their disorder, observe one fact and know no more than one fact. But is this real observation of history? You should picture yourself actually in the situation, observe which things are profitable and which dangerous, and note the misfortunes and ills of the time. Shut the book and think for yourself. Imagine that you are facing these various facts and then decide what you think ought to be done. If you look at history in this way, then your learning will increase and your intelligence improve. Then you will get real profit from your reading.”¹

1. The twelfth century B.C. represents what set of years?
2. Should a student of history just collect facts? What must you be able to do?
3. What does the Chinese historian suggest should be a rule of history? Why is this an important guideline?