

Note Taking and Study Tips

1. Always begin your notes for each lecture on a new page, add a title and date. This helps keep your notes organized and manageable for when you study them later.
2. Brief is better! DON'T write word for word. Write down important people, concepts, and ideas. Highlight, underline, and annotate main ideas. If you try to write word for word you'll be too busy focusing on capturing each word rather than main points, names and concepts. As Berkeley College says "don't write a sentence when you can write down a phrase."
3. Use the power of the power point! If you're new to note taking, try printing the power points (your printer/library printer should be able to print them as a handout). Use the lines next to the slides to write down points being emphasized/ additional information.
4. Pay attention! Note the tone (i.e: dee-pen-dency!) and what your professor is saying. Are any points being emphasized repeatedly? (i.e: Haiti was the first independent nation in the Americas. Haiti was the *first independent* nation in the Americas. It was the *first and only* nation to be founded *exclusively by slaves*, not elite white creoles.) If it's being emphasized, it's important. Are we spending a lot of time discussing something in depth (i.e: the Haitian Revolution)? Pay attention to these sorts of things and make sure you write it down, because it'll probably be important to study it later for any midterms or exams (i.e: the Haitian Revolution).
5. Vocabulary matters! Write down any key vocabulary or terms. If you're unfamiliar with a term, make a note to look it up later or ask in class. Take note of any important people (i.e: Toussaint Louverture) or any important events (i.e: The Haitian Revolution). Remember the 5 W's.
6. Know the 5 W's: Who, what, when, where, and why. Please also see the 5 W's worksheet on canvas.

Example:

Who: gens de couleur (free mixed race people), Toussaint L'Ouverture

What: News of the French revolution reached Haiti and inspired what would later become the first successful slave revolt. Gens de Couleur, although free and even at times slave owners themselves, did not have the same equality to whites of similar economic status. They did not seek to end slavery. Conflict between whites and the gens de couleur, and the brutality of slavery on the island led to the rebellion of Haitian slaves. Later, Napoleon's intention to reinstate slavery continued to spur the revolution forward.

When: 1789-1804

Where: Saint Domingue (Haiti)

Why: This was the first successful revolution for independence in Latin America, which would later influence other revolutions in the Americas. It is also the first successful slave rebellion, which would later influence discussions on race in the Americas, specifically discussions of abolition, citizenship and equality. The Haitian constitution was the first to abolish slavery and racial discrimination.

7. Note the significance! Write down the overall SIGNIFICANCE of events. Think: why does this matter? What is the BIG picture?
Example: Haiti was the first successful slave revolt and the first nation to gain independence in Latin America. It also had the first constitution that abolished slavery and racial discrimination. The revolution in Haiti would later influence independence movements and issues of citizenship, slavery and race throughout the Americas.
8. Visualize! Consider visuals: Look at maps, make a Venn diagram in your notebook. Draw pictures to demonstrate ideas. If you are a visual learner it can help to look at regions affected, or visually see the comparison between two events or concepts (i.e: independence in Brazil vs. Spanish America).

Study tips

9. Get organized! Get a planner. It doesn't have to be fancy, you can find cheap ones for less than \$5. I highly recommend them because in college organization is key. Write down when your quizzes are, when papers are due, when your exams are. Most college students take multiple classes, and as the semester goes on and becomes busier it's easy to forget when assignments are due, or when you have a midterm. This makes it easier to pace yourself and prioritize your time.
10. Study! Spend a little time every night reviewing what you have learned. Don't wait until the night before a test. Do not pull all nighters. Your brain uses sleep to encode what you have learned during the day. Sleep is important!
11. How do I begin?! I recommend the 5 W's on Canvas. Can you fill it out completely (i.e: about the Haitian Revolution)? If you forget something (i.e: the who), that's where you should start.
12. Summarize! Try to summarize the main points. This can help reinforce the 5 w's and help you to retain key information. For example, it's not as important to know Joseph Stalin as a young adult was studying to be a priest as it is that he led Russia to undergo massive industrialization at a rapid rate.
13. Compare! Be able to make comparisons between events. How are they similar? How are they different? Who is involved (Is it the Maya, the campesinos, slaves, women?)? What were their motivations (ex: Religion, wealth, ideology)? Where did the events take place (ex: Haiti, Mexico, Argentina)? Are there any key figures (i.e: Tupac Katari, Manuela Saenz, Toussaint Louverture, Simon Bolivar)?
14. Turn off the T.V! Don't study in front of the T.V or while scrolling through Instagram. These are tempting but it will cause you to be distracted and not focus on retaining

important information. Science has proven that humans cannot multitask. Find a quiet place to study where you won't be distracted.

15. Use your classmates! If possible, study in groups. Rent a room at the library and quiz each other on important names, events, and concepts. This is a great way to provide feedback to one another, compare notes, and make sure there isn't key information you are missing.
16. If you're having trouble understanding any material, get some extra help! Go to office hours or make use of University Resources such as the tutoring center. Remember, the semester *flies* by (and we are covering more than 500 years of history), so go the minute you start to have some difficulty with the material. If writing papers gives you a lot of anxiety, utilize the Writing Resource Center (right down the hall from our class in room 125!).