

Social Studies Department

Survival Guide

The following are suggestions from the teachers of the social studies department to help you achieve the highest possible success in your history class.

1. **Set a goal** – What grade do you want in this class and what will you have to do to achieve it? You are in control of this.
2. **Use a time tracker/assignment notebook** – Keep track of all assignments, deadlines and due dates. Then **prioritize** the work and set time aside to complete it. ###
3. **Keep a class folder** – Use it for class notes and to keep track of all handouts and returned assignments. This resource will help you prepare for exams.
4. **Come prepared for class** – This should at least include having your textbook, class folder, paper and a writing utensil.
5. **READ** – All classes have textbooks. The material covered in class and on exams comes from the textbook. The best way to prepare for class and review for exams is to READ the assigned sections of the textbook. ###
6. **Complete and turn in all assignments on time.**
7. **Participate in class discussions and activities.**
8. **Understand class expectations and the grading system** – You must understand your task before you can succeed. Keep track of your grade by checking Parent/Student access on Skyward. ###
9. **Prepare for exams** – Your teachers will inform you of what is on the exam, use that information as well as study guides and section/chapter reviews in your textbook to prepare. Practice makes perfect when it comes to answering questions. ###
10. **Ask questions** – You are your own best advocate. Check with your teacher, at appropriate times, whenever you are confused about something in class.

TIME TRACKERS/CALENDARS

All of us need a little help remembering our daily responsibilities. The Bloomington High School time tracker/calendar is an excellent tool with which to accomplish this.

All teachers provide advanced schedules of some sort for their classes. Some have boards or signs devoted to this hanging in the room. Others address it as part of their daily class announcements. Listen for details during the first five minutes or last five minutes of classes. Still others provide a weekly hand out of assignments or list them on a class website, if one exists. Regardless of how your teacher relays this information to you, it needs to be written down somewhere so that you can refer back to it during study times. You should also see it in relation to the responsibilities you have in other classes to help you **PRIORITIZE** what tasks need to be completed first. Keeping a time tracker/calendar will assist you with this.

We suggest that you fill in the time trackers on Sunday or Monday evenings in order to plan ahead for the upcoming week.

Putting too much into the time tracker/calendar, however, creates a mess. It can also make you feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you have to do. We suggest the following as a guideline for what to put in to the tracker, and what to leave out.

Things to include:

- Exam dates
- Homework deadlines
- Project due dates
- Reading assignments
- Work schedule (if you have a job)
- Practice times (if in a sport)
- Study times available
- Holidays – days off school

Things not to include:

- Notes to friends
- Doodling
- Phones #s
- Random thoughts

Textbook Reading Strategies

Reading is probably the most important activity we can do to "get ahead" in life. However, many of us take reading for granted. We feel we are too busy to read, or maybe we don't enjoy reading. Not only is it important to read effectively when you study, but reading for pleasure at least 20 minutes a day will improve your life and your ability to read. Read whatever interests you - just read, be flexible, and remember to keep reading every day.

One successful strategy for textbook reading is: SQ4R

- Step 1: **S**urvey
- Step 2: **Q**uestion
- Step 3: **R**ead
- Step 4: **R**ecord
- Step 5: **R**ecite
- Step 6: **R**eflect

S = Survey / Preview

- Make the book your friend; look at the cover; review the Table of Contents, Introduction, and Index, and back cover to become familiar with the format and the material.
- Survey the assigned chapter. Look at the chapter title and topic headings. See how the chapter is organized and how many pages are in the chapter.
- Quickly read the chapter introduction, the first sentence of each paragraph and the chapter summary to see what material will be discussed in the chapter and how it is presented.

Q = Question

Reading with a purpose (to answer questions) increases concentration, comprehension, retention, and interest in the subject matter.

Questions to have in mind to answer as you read may come from:

- your instructor;
- worksheets, take home tests, quizzes;
- questions throughout and at the end of the chapter;

Change the main headings into questions, e.g., "Reduce Study Stress" to "How can I reduce study stress?" Then as you read the section write down the answers to your questions or make a notation in the margin. Get engaged with the material.

R = Read

Read one section at a time to understand the material and answer your questions. Do not read to memorize the information. On paper write down chapter headings and titles to use as outline notes later in this process.

Keep focused on your reading. Helpful hints include:

- write down problems on paper to be handled later;
- schedule reading breaks every hour or half-hour if it is a difficult subject;
- make associations or visualize the information to make it more meaningful;
- do not take notes while reading;
- read aggressively, with the intent of getting answers, noting supporting details, and remembering major points;
- As you read, use a pencil to put check marks in the margin by important ideas. Be sure all your questions have been answered.
- Reread sections as needed. Be an active reader.

R = Record

After reading each section and page, reflect and summarize the information in your notes. Put ideas into your own words to reinforce your understanding of what you have read. Taking notes at this point in time will almost ensure that you are noting the important parts of the section. Go back over the paragraph and highlight or underline only the main ideas and supporting details with no more than 10-15% of the page highlighted. Use marginal notations as a way to separate main ideas from examples and each of those from new terminology.

R = Recite

Recite out loud the information you have read. Tell yourself the major concepts of the section using your own words. Ask yourself questions on your reading and answer those questions out loud. Study with a friend or in a group to discuss and reinforce the material. Studies show that students who recite forget only 20% of learned material within a two-week period. Those who do not recite or discuss the material forget 80% of the information in the same time period.

R = Reflect / Review

Reflection weaves new ideas into old, by comparing the new ideas with ones you already know. By asking yourself, "Upon what evidence are these new ideas and information based?" and "How can I use this new material?" you should increase your creativity, your knowledge, and critical thinking skills. Review the material within 24 hours. This moves the information from short-term to long-term memory. Review often. Revise study notes as needed. The more you review, the more information you will learn and retain. This avoids last minute "cramming" for a test.

A second successful strategy for textbook reading is: UNRAAVEL

U nderline title.

N ow predict passage.

R un through and number the paragraphs.

A re you reading the questions?

A re the important words circled? (Write down their meaning)

V enture (read) through the passage.

E liminate the obvious wrong answers.

L et the questions be answered, and write the paragraph #
where you found the

Answers.

Double check your work.

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Social Science Grading Options

There are 2 common ways that teachers calculate student grades. Below is a description of weighted grades and total points.

Weighted Grades

When a teacher chooses to use weighted grades, they break their class work into various categories. Common categories include exams, assignments, and class participation. After selecting categories for each class, the teacher will assign a percentage of the total grade to make the category worth. All categories must add up to 100%.

Ex.) Your quarter grade will consist of the following categories: Exams/Projects 50%, Assignments 40%, and Class Participation 10%.

- Each item in a category is worth the same weight, regardless of total points. For example, if quizzes are worth 25% as a category, a quiz worth 50 points will not be weighted more than a quiz worth 15 points.
- The weight for each item is calculated by taking the weight for the category and dividing that by the number of items in the category.
- The number of items in the category is counted as the number of items the Instructor has created in that category. Therefore, if Quizzes have a 100% weight and a Student takes an exam and gets a perfect score, his or her weighted total will be 100%. If the Instructor adds a second quiz, the Students weighted total will drop to 50%, since the weight for each item is divided by two. Since, the Student has not taken the second exam yet, their score for it is zero.

Total Points

When a teacher chooses to use total points to calculate a student's grade, they add up the points earned on each assignment, quiz, exam, and projects and then divide the sum by the total points that could have been earned throughout the quarter.

Ex) Your grade may be accumulated as follows

*Chapter 2 Test—45/50
Chapter 2 Assignment #1—13/15
Chapter 2 Assignment #2—10/15
Chapter 2 Quiz—20/20*

*First the teacher would add $45+13+10+20$ (the points you earned)=88
Then the teacher would add $50+15+15+20$ (the total points available)=100
Finally, the teacher would divide 88 by 100 to find the percentage=88%*

Preparing for Exams – BHS Social Sciences Department



*The key to reaching your full potential is to find what works best for you.
Below are some suggestions to help you better prepare for exam day!*

1. Rewrite your classroom notes. This will allow you to organize them and clean them up. Also, it will reinforce the content as you write them again.
2. Read the chapter! This is an easy skill to work on and it will reinforce the content covered in the classroom.
3. When working on vocabulary terms, learn the 5 W's and H: who, what, when, where, why and how. Do not write the least possible material down to study from.
4. Try making flash cards. Put the vocab term, name or place on one side and the definition on the other to quiz yourself from.
5. Plan out your weekly study time in your planner. For example, your history test two days away is more important than your paper due next week.
6. Study with a friend who has the same teacher as you do.
7. Work on the chapter review questions as a “practice test”. Try them first on your own; look up the answer in the book if you need help.
8. Ask questions during the review session!
9. Complete all homework and daily activities. They are intended to reinforce what you learn in the classroom.
10. Self-advocate! If you felt that you prepared well and studied the content thoroughly but still did not do well, ask your teacher for suggestions!

Social Science Department Writing Assessment Rubric

Student: _____

Class Period: _____

Assignment: _____

Scoring

Exceeds	3
Meets	2
Does not meet	1

Structure and Organization

Introduces effectively
Writes to topic throughout
Essay is organized
Concludes effectively

3	2	1

Comments:

Content

State clear thesis/main idea
Provides support in body/body paragraphs
Argument is presented effectively

3	2	1

Comments:

Mechanics

Spells correctly
Punctuation is acceptable, does not interfere with comprehension
Uses language that is effective in conveying main ideas

3	2	1

Comments: