

## Reading and Note-taking Tips - History 1330

### 1. Before you start reading:

- Consider printing out the reading – although it costs a little more, many people read more carefully and comprehend more when they read something on paper rather than on-line
- Notice what the reading is – who wrote it (what type of person), when, and what the title suggests about its purpose or big ideas
- Look at the structure of the reading – are there any headings that give you clues to the purposes of different sections?
- \*\* Read all the homework questions before you start so you know what you're looking for. \*\*

### 2. As you're carefully reading

- When you see a potential answer to one of the questions, make a mark in the margins (like "Q2")
- Keep looking for answers to a question even though you've found one – so you don't miss something and because you'll usually need thorough answers and multiple specific examples/evidence
- I recommend you wait to begin taking notes until you've read the whole article  
- because taking good notes takes time and interrupts your reading flow

### 3. When you're done reading the selection and are taking notes

- Find your marginal marks with answers to the questions
- Write down specific information in your answers – what exactly happened (and where and when) in a key event, or a quotation that illustrates someone's experience or attitudes. This will ensure that you have good evidence for discussion and essays
- Make sure you're directly answering what was asked
- Be sure to include the question on the assignment along with your answers – that will help you understand the notes a few weeks from now and during a quiz.
- Note things that confuse you so you can ask about them
- Feel free to include any other info from the reading that connects to our goals and typical discussions

### Feeling unsure of the big ideas in the reading?

Re-read the first few pages and the last few paragraphs, because authors often lay out their main points in the beginning and summarize them in the end.

### 4. Before class

- If you've typed your notes, be sure to print them with plenty of time before class
- Review your notes (both the questions and your answers) so you're ready for discussion or a quiz