STARS: S T A R S HISTORY

HISTORY

History focuses on concepts and patterns throughout time. Because of the sheer volume of information related to the subject, some students become intimidated. Don't let this be you! History is all about finding the big ideas and using the facts to back these ideas up.
It is about trying to discover why things occurred. WHY and HOW are the big things to focus on. History also includes many different perspectives. Reading through these perspectives and discovering your own ideas makes history interesting.

Focus on:

Conceptual framework. History may have many little facts and dates, but they mean nothing without the big ideas.

Think about the impact of different events on various regions and classes.

When and how did similar situations happen at different points in time?

How does a particular event work with the other things happening at that time?

How does periodization occur? What changes create different environments and reactions?

When Reading:

Consider the following questions about the book's point- Who wrote the book and how will this effect what they say? Why? What is the main point? Why were we given this book? What is the larger issue shown by these facts?

Do not just copy the book, put information into your own words.

Try reading a paragraph completely before writing the information from the first sentence. This way you will know where the thought pattern is headed.

Use a variety of presentation methods. Sometimes pages of outlines just blend together. One way of doing this is with Cornell style notes (see the Notetaking STARS sheet). With this method, big ideas may be placed in the margin, keeping them from being swallowed up by the large amounts of facts.

These are a few methods of notetaking which do not involve outlines:

Notes from reading can be placed on one page with corresponding lecture notes on the opposite page.

During class:

Figure out what the main focus of the lecture is. Why did they use the ideas they did for their main point?

If you have questions, ask them! If you want to talk to a professor about an idea or have an in-depth question, use their office hours

At the end of class, write down major points for the day.
Listen for major transition points, they often include summaries.