A Level History: USA - Making of a Superpower (1865-1975)

Read Chapters 9-12 of Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States* and make notes using the different methods below. Use a different method for each chapter to find out which one works best for you.

https://www.historyisaweapon.com/zinnapeopleshistory.html

Taking notes at A-level

During classes and for home learning you will be expected to take notes on a broad range of topics and case studies, therefore it is important that you arrange and structure these notes in a way that is both informative and easy to revise from when required. The more organised you are with your note taking the easier your revision will be.

To help you with note taking at A-level below are some different note taking and revision strategies that you should be familiarising yourselves with. Not every format will work for you but it is important that you establish good practice. Notes are not about writing down everything they are about recording the key information As you go through the resources above try some of the different note taking strategies below:
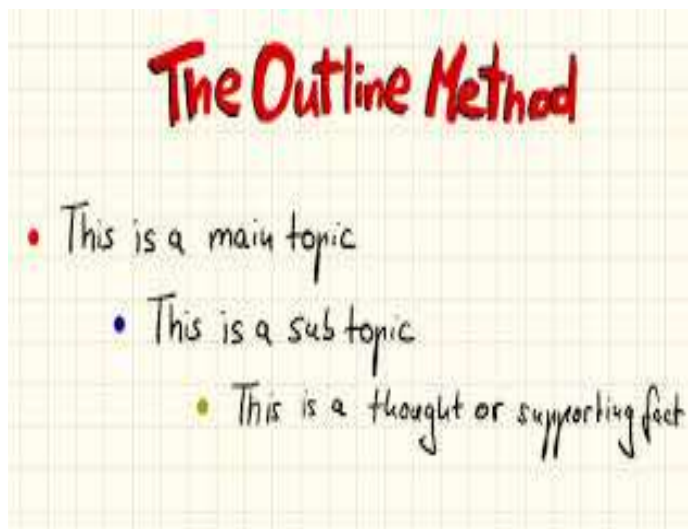
1. The outline method:

One of the best and most popular methods, it lets you organise notes in a structured form and break up different topics and their subtopics. Main topics go on the far left and add subtopics below using indents.
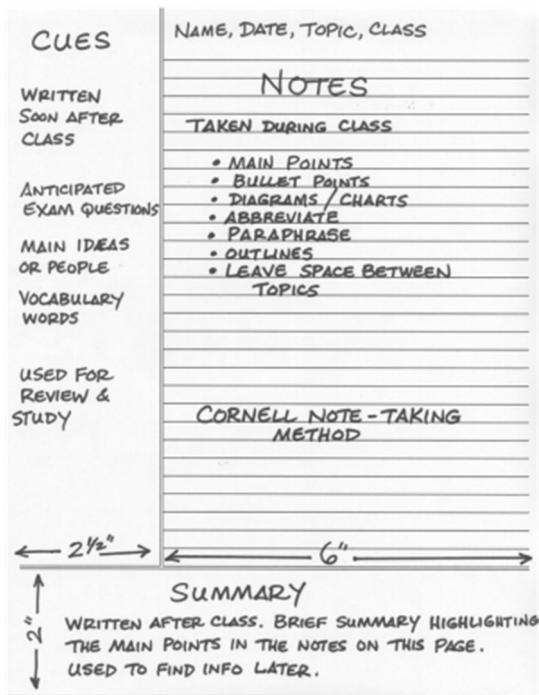
Pros:
- Highlights points in a logical way
- Reduces reviewing and editing time
- Gives a clear structure.

Cons:
- Doesn't work well if the lesson or resource jumps between topics.

The Outline Method
- This is a main topic
  - This is a sub topic
    - This is a thought or supporting fact

2. The Cornell Note:

http://lsc.cornell.edu/study-skills/cornell-note-taking-system/

One you may be familiar with from GCSE. A very structured form of note taking with a clear page layout, all the main notes from class go in the main note taking section, the small left hand column is for main topics or questions, and the section at the bottom allows you to summarise your learning.

Pros:

- A quick way to organise and review notes
- Very systematic
- Cuts down reviewing time

Cons:

- Requires preparation beforehand
- Needs time for reviewing and summarising after the lesson.
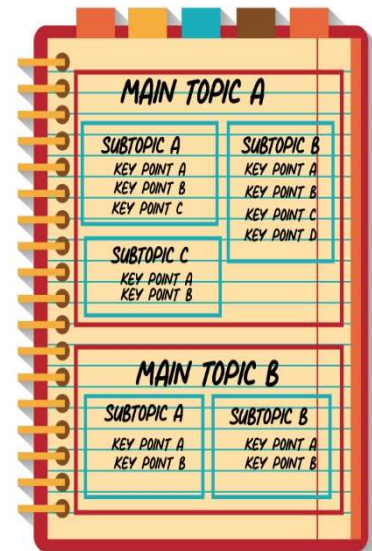
3. The Boxing Method:

A less common method but becoming more popular. A dedicated box is assigned for each section of notes, with smaller boxes used for each sub section. Best used when doing digital notes but can still be used for hand written work or when reviewing notes from a lesson.
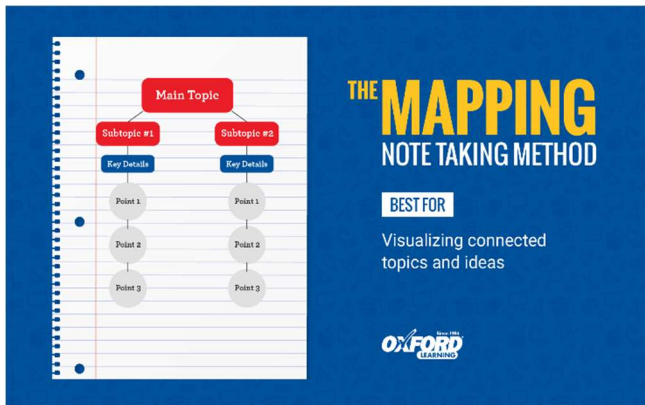
Pros:

- Segregates and organises information
- Allows you to focus on one box at a time when revising

Cons:

- Not east to do during a live lesson
- Doesn't work well if no overall topics can be assigned to groups.

4.The Mapping Method:

Mind mapping is one of the most common forms of note taking, and is best used when there is a large amount of content around a topic, for instance tectonics has a large number of volcanic and seismic case studies. Mind mapping is also useful to show the relationships and links between different sub topics.

There are two types of mind mapping you can use, a traditional **mind map** (spider diagram) or a **flow line map.**
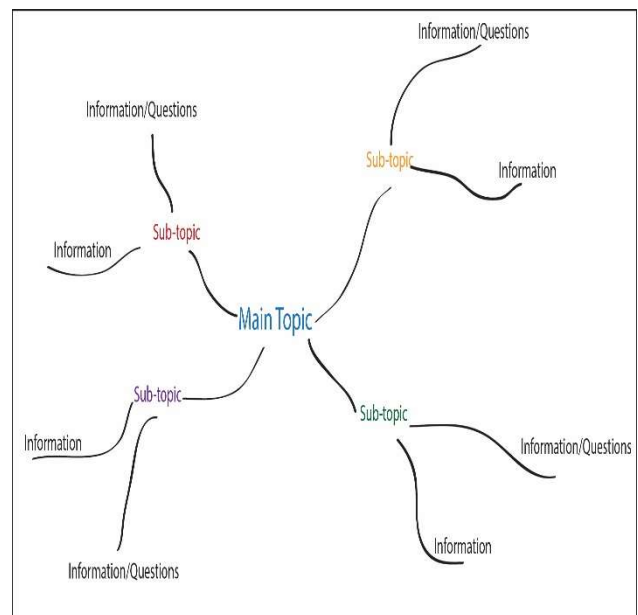
A traditional mind map is excellent for breaking down large case studies or key ideas, whilst a flow line map is an excellent visual way of outlining geographic processes.

Pros:
- Visually appealing
- Detailed information in a concise form
- Easy editing of notes

Cons:
- Can run out of space if notes are too detailed
- Can be time consuming to create.

There is no definitive way to take notes and you will naturally fall into a structure that is natural for you during lessons.