

The Interactive Student Notebook

"Many student notebooks are drab repositories of information filled with uninspired, unconnected, and poorly understood ideas. Interactive Student Notebooks, however, allow students to record information about history in an engaging way" (TCI, 6).

As you learn new ideas in class, you will be using various types of writing and graphic techniques to record this information. Then, you will be doing something with these ideas instead of just letting the information sit in your notebook. This will allow you to use your critical-thinking skills, take advantage of your creativity, and become more independent in your education!

The Interactive Student Notebook (ISN) approach has been classroom tested in many schools around the United States. The approach helps students in their education, for it requires them to use both linguistic and visual intelligences, turns note-taking into an active process, helps students become organized as they learn, and demonstrates student growth and achievement over a period of time.

[Teachers Curriculum Institute](#). History Alive! Interactive Student Notebook. Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley, 1994.

Your Interactive Student Notebook will be your property, and will be your key to success in social studies class this year. It will contain your notes, handouts, and valuable information concerning class material. It will also contain your thoughts, your creativity, and your personality - take care of it! Your Interactive Student Notebook must come to class every day! This is essential!

Your Interactive Student Notebook must contain the following aspects:

- A COVER with your basic information - your name, the course name, your class period, and Ms. Rainwater's name.

- A UNIT TITLE PAGE with the title of the unit and a colorful drawing or illustration representing the theme of the unit. Be creative!
- A TABLE OF CONTENTS identifying the material contained in the notebook, in chronological order and the page number in your notebook.
- All assigned MATERIALS, including class notes, homework assignments, and handouts, with the pages numbered - each material must have your name and the date. (Only the materials used in your portfolio may be missing. In that work's place, put a note indicating it in the portfolio.)
- COLOR used in an appropriate and educational manner.

All materials that are contained in your notebook must have a title, including the date. This is primarily aimed at class materials, such as bellringers, notes and diagrams, as well as homework assignments (after they have been returned) and reading responses.

I will give you examples of these aspects as we proceed in class, and I will always have an updated table of contents online containing the materials that I expect to be in your notebook.

Evaluation

Your notebooks will be checked periodically. At times, I will spot check your notebooks and give you instant feedback. Other times, I will grade your notebooks on thoroughness, quality and accuracy of work, organization, and visual appeal. Every assignment should be complete and neat. Also, your artistic or creative touch should be visible throughout the notebook. Use color, pictures, and diagrams in order to reinforce class materials. You will also be evaluating your notebooks!

It is also important to realize that it is your responsibility to obtain class notes, materials, and notebook assignments in the case that you are absent from class. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete notebook and less knowledge and creativity! I know you will have a ton of questions concerning your notebooks, and I will try to answer all of them as we progress in class.

Remember that this is a great chance to use your creativity, and change a boring binder into a dynamic work of educational art!

We will have some time every week to work on these notebooks. You will be able to decorate the covers, so if you find things at home that you might want to try out, you can bring them in. We will use construction paper to help make our unit cover pages. You will use lined paper to help with the table of contents. These notebooks will be ever changing and a great learning experience together!