

“Tips to be Successful in Social Studies”

Being a sophomore in social studies can be quite an intimidating experience. Most students have not been in a history class since the 8th grade and have forgotten what it takes to be successful in this subject. The standards and expectations are much higher than what students experienced back in middle school. After the first day, many come home frazzled and confused. Parents wanting only the best for their child worry about how to provide support. Some will seek out the counsel of tutors, but at \$50 an hour, in this economy not all people can afford this luxury. Instead, there are cheaper and more effective tools which a student can use to be successful in their social studies classes at CCA.

During freshman year, have your child start reading the world section of the newspaper. Several teachers in the social studies department like to use current events and make connections to past events; the other benefit is that your child is reading. A large portion of social studies is reading and being able to make analytical observations. Teachers in the social studies department want their students to not only be able to say the “what,” but more importantly answer the “why.” With so many of the social studies classes not requiring students to turn in written work, but rather take in class reading quizzes, the emphasis in social studies is reading comprehension. The social studies department understands that a majority of its students will continue pursuing their academic career in college where expectations are even higher. By creating a curriculum that is challenging, your child will be prepared for the next level. Some members of the department have offered tips on how to be successful in social studies.

Social Studies Teachers Helpful Hints:

Luke Duchene (AP World History, College Prep World History)

- Organizational skills are vital in an AP history course. With an immense amount of content covered in class, and at home, students need to have an organized binder. Such a binder would have appropriate sections as well as a logical sequence. Notes need to be organized within their own section in a manner that would promote a logical progression of knowledge. Students must also learn and apply the skill of time management. Balancing school work, family time, extracurricular activities, and personal time will help to maintain sanity.

Kellie Dunkirk (AP Psychology/Economics/Government/Modern World History)

- Check website daily for homework assignments, projects, course schedules, hand-outs.
- Development of note-taking skills in order to be successful on daily quizzes and during lecture; knowing what is important to write down and what is not.
- Self-advocating: coming in to discuss content that needs further clarification.

Mr. Gilbert (College Prep World History, College Prep Government, US History)

- "When working with second language learners and reading comprehension, it is important to focus on understanding vocabulary. A Vocabulary- Wall or notebook is a helpful tool where ELL students can use visual images and sentences to help identify key words."

Mr. Lockhart (Modern World History, Sociology, Film and Society)

- Find a place that is free from distractions; no computer, no fridge, no I-pod, no phone, etc. Read the chapter first without taking any kind of notes. Let it sit for a day and then go back and read it for a second time. During this time, focus on key concepts and vocabulary words; some find it helpful to create an outline. After reading the section, can you explain what you just read? If the answer is "No," then read it again until you can explain the "what" and the "why."

Mr. Spilken (AP US History, College Prep History, and Pop Culture)

- Students need to increase their proficiency in regards to their academic vocabulary, for this will be the key to understanding the texts and documents they are reading. Often times a picture/illustration is an effective way for lower level or secondary language students to build their academic vocabulary.

Mr. Stiven

- I believe in activating all parts of the brain. So I want to read the text (homework), write the text (note-taking either in class or at home), speak the text (in-class discussion) and do the text (through an activity or by open-note quiz). I ask them

questions in class as a formative assessment daily and quizzes weekly. I try to have one activity a week as well.

Christopher Tallman (AP U.S History and College Prep U.S History)

- Students are encouraged with a lot of individual thought and creativity in the classroom. In effect, this involves causing students to become critical thinkers, effective communicators, life-long learners, responsible citizens, and creative and self-expressive individuals. The most important skill for my students is to become critical thinkers. I want my students to be able to differentiate between fact and opinion, analyze and interpret collected information, draw logical conclusions and apply appropriate strategies to solve complex problems in a variety of contexts.

Mr. Unwin

- As far as Econ is concerned, vocabulary development is critical. Many of the terms that they learn about are new to most students and I have found that giving them assignments that focus on vocabulary really helps. The other tip is giving students a lot of practice questions. Econ tends to be like math which requires a lot of practice.