

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderate

Step1

Acquaint yourself with the structure of each of your [child's](#) textbooks. Each book follows a consistent format. Often the book will be divided into units that contain several smaller chapters. Chapters will be divided into sections. Usually there are review questions at the end of the sections and a more lengthy set of activities at the end of each chapter and unit. Units, chapters and sections have titles that reveal which main topic will be covered. These titles often are written in a boldface font. The titles will become the headings in your child's notes.

Step2

Provide a spiral [notebook](#) for each subject that has a textbook.

Step3

Explain to your child that if he takes notes while he reads his assignments it will be easier for him to remember the material. It will take him less time to answer questions and it will give him a quick way to study for tests. Since he won't have to reread the book, he will save time getting prepared for tests.

Step4

Sit together with your child and have a conversation about the way the textbook is set up. Talk about the pictures on the covers of the book. Provoke your child's curiosity about what she will learn by by asking questions about the pictures. Look at the table of contents. Discover the colors used to highlight boxes in the text that give definitions or additional information that will be helpful. Point out the index and the glossary. Learn how new vocabulary words are introduced. They may be defined in the margin or boldfaced when they are presented for the first time.

Step5

Write notes only on the pages on the right. This leaves a blank page to the left of each set of notes. All the new words that are introduced in a section will be listed on that blank page. Write the names of any maps or charts and their page numbers in this same place. This is also a good place to list the names, dates and contributions of important people mentioned in the chapter.

Step6

Model how to use the titles to take notes by doing the first section with your child. Write the title of the chapter on the heading of a new page in your notebook. Put the number of the first page of the chapter in the margin next to the title. Do this for each section heading as well. This provides a cross reference. If your child must answer a question about a topic, the page numbers in the notes will help him to find the page with the answer quickly.

Step7

Say that each title will be a heading in the notes. Underline the titles or put them in quotations since you will be copying them directly from the book.

Step8

Remind your child that the first sentence of each paragraph tells the main idea for the whole paragraph. Then direct her to count the number of paragraphs that are in the section that you are reading. Write the number "1" in your notes on the line underneath the section heading. Read the first sentence. Ask your child to paraphrase the sentence using her own words. Then write what she said next to the number one. Read the rest of the paragraph. Ask her what details she learned from the paragraph. Then write the number "2" and do the same thing with the next paragraph.

Keep doing this until the entire section is read, the first sentence of each paragraph has been paraphrased and recorded in your notes.

Step9

List the new words that were introduced on the blank page on the left side of the spiral notebook. Place the page number from the book on which each new word was first used. List the charts and maps by their titles and page numbers. If important people are introduced, their names and dates and a short hint about their major contribution or role can be noted on this page as well.

Step10

Answer the review questions at the end of the section. If the teacher requires those answers to be handed in, don't wait until the whole chapter has been read to start writing the homework paper. Have your child do it in little pieces as he comes to the questions.

Step11

Help your child to study for tests by having her reread her notes. Then take the notes and ask questions based on the information that was included in the text. Make her define new words and explain new concepts.