

Mrs. Athmer's Interactive Student Notebooks

Introduction:

The Interactive Student Notebook (ISN) will be used differently than your other notebooks. This will be more than just a place to stuff handouts that you rarely look at after they are graded. You will use your ISN in class most days. You must have it with you EVERYDAY. The purpose of this notebook is to enable you to be a creative, independent thinker and writer. ISN will be used for class notes, activities, class discussions, as well as assignments. You will be asked to express your own ideas and process the information presented in notes, lessons, class discussions, or assignments.

Why do they work:

This notebook style uses both the right and the left sides of the brain to help you sort, categorize, remember, and creatively interact with the knowledge you are gaining in class. The more you process information the more you begin to understand it. This leads to longer retention. My hope is this setup will teach you how to study, how to review materials you did not understand at first, and help you create tools you can use to rehearse and practice materials.

How do I set up my notebook:

We will do most of the set up work in class. This will be a guideline for you to use outside of the classroom if you need to do some of the work on your own. It will also help you and your parents understand the importance of the ISN.

1. **The Cover**—The upper right-hand corner should contain your first and last name, as well as the hour of your American History class. The rest of the cover should be decorated using drawings, pictures, stickers, decorative tape, or other items to help you identify your ISN at a glance. The decorated cover is also important to help you feel ownership. You will be more likely to use the notebook as it was intended if it is attractive to you.
2. **Table of Contents**—This will be used for listing all the items you include in your notebook and will help both of us find specific items quickly. It is important that you keep this current and complete. All items that should be in your notebook will be listed on the whiteboard on the west side of the classroom. This should help you keep up your Table of Contents and keep us all on track together.
3. **Page Numbers**—As we will be using both sides of the notebook, you will number your pages as left and right. For example: L1, R1, L2, R2, L3, R3, etc...
4. **Color**—I want you to use as much color in your ISN as possible. To help you with this, you should bring colored pencils and pens with you each day. I will also have crayons and colored pencils available in the classroom. Just as the decorations on the cover make you more likely to use the notebook, color will do the same and help you remember important information. For example, you may use colored pencils to draw objects on the left that remind you of vocabulary we discussed together on the right. You may take notes in your notebook during class, and that evening you might rewrite key points or group items you think go together in certain colors of ink on the left. Color can be a great tool to use when studying new items.
5. **Attaching Items**—When you attach items inside your ISN, please use **tape or glue sticks only**. Staples do not work well and other teachers have told me they have cut their fingers on the staples in the past. Liquid glue does not work well either as it takes a long time to dry and sometimes causes pages to stick together.

So what makes this notebook interactive:

All assigned work and notes will be done on the Right-hand side of the notebook. On your own, you will make connections to the Left-hand side. Sometimes I will tell you what I would like you to do to make the connection, especially at the beginning of the year. But as the year goes on, it will be up to you to make this connection **on your own**. Examples of connections could be drawings, re-writing in your own words, poems, song lyrics you know, magazine pictures, etc... We will also be learning some techniques in class. You may look at examples and ask for suggestions when you need help with an idea. These connections will help you study and learn the information!