



Note-Taking from Text Sources

Purpose

Note-taking from written and oral sources is an active reading and listening activity. Notes provide students with rich material to aid in information recall, essay-writing, and exam preparation.

Note-Taking from Text Sources

1. Write heading on the front: name, date, and topic.
2. Label the left column on the front *Main Ideas* and the right column *Supporting Details*. Label the left column on the back *Questions* and the right column *Answers*.
3. Write down the topic.
4. Copy the highlighted main idea under *Main Ideas* and the highlighted details under *Supporting Details*.
5. Record questions in under *Questions* on the back.
6. Ask questions and record correct responses under *Answers*.
7. Write a summary of the main ideas.

Materials

The two-column, one-sided method of note-taking (see Figures 8 and 9) calls for lined paper, preferably with a wide left margin. (Students can also fold their paper.) Students also need pencils or pens.

Steps

Teachers should provide an example of two-column notes from a written source. The class uses it as a model to discuss how this form of note-taking differs from other forms and how it might be helpful for studying.

Students use headings to keep their notes organized and sequential. The heading on the

front includes the student's name, the date, and the topic. The left column is labeled *Main Ideas* and the right column *Supporting Details*. Students only take notes on the front.

The back of each note-taking sheet is reserved for asking questions about the material on the front, and recording answers. Students label the left column on the back *Questions* and the right column *Answers*.

If the class has been learning highlighting, students can practice taking notes using a selection they already highlighted. This is an effective way to help students connect disparate study skills. After they write down the topic, students simply copy the highlighted main idea into the left column of their notes and the highlighted supporting details into the right column. For better visual organization, students should skip a line or two between main ideas and between groups of supporting details.



John Newhall September 18, 2007 Language Arts	
Topic: Sentence Structure	
Main Ideas	Supporting Details
<u>Simple sentence</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can have one subject + one verb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also called <u>independent clause</u> 	(simple subject SS and simple verb SV)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses one complete thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can have more than one subject
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must include at least one subject 	and more than one verb (compound
and at least one verb	subject CS and compound verb CV)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex. Harry runs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS = Harry; SV = runs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex. Harry and Natasha run and shout.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS = Harry and Natasha; CV = run and shout
<u>Compound sentence</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two+ simple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can have simple or compound
(independent clauses) linked by a	subjects and simple or compound verbs
comma + coordinating conjunction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex. Harry runs, but Jamal walks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can also link independent clauses with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS1 = Harry; SS2 = Jamal; SV1 =
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a semicolon 	runs; SV2 = walks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a semicolon + conjunctive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex. Harry and Natasha run and
adverb + comma	shout, but Jamal and Alicia walk and talk.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS1 = Harry and Natasha; CS2 =
	Jamal and Alicia; CV1 = run and
	shout; CV2 = walk and talk

Figure 8. An example of two-column notes (front).



Questions	Answers
Is there a name for a sentence that doesn't express a complete thought?	Sentence fragment
Why is "Clean up your room" an independent clause?	In an imperative sentence (a command), the subject "you" is meant to be understood by the listener, even if it isn't spoken or written.
Summary	
The first two types of sentences that are important to know are simple and compound. A simple sentence is called an independent clause. It must have at least one subject and verb and express a complete thought. One subject is called a simple subject, but more than one is called a compound subject. One verb is called a simple verb, but more than one is called a compound verb.	
A compound sentence is two simple sentences put together into one. To do this, you have to use a comma plus a coordinating conjunction (or a semicolon, or a semicolon plus a conjunctive adverb plus a comma) between the two simple sentences. A good way to remember the difference is that simple equals one, and compound equals more than one.	

Figure 9. An example of two-column notes (back).



If students do not have a highlighted text to work from, teachers can distribute a short expository text for practice. Simple is best. The text should be accessible to all students in terms of decoding level and the complexity of ideas. As teachers read the text with the class, they should “speak” their thought process. For example, “I’ve read the first few sentences, and the article seems to be about the Civil War, so I think I’ll put that at the top of my page as the topic.” Teachers then review how to identify main ideas and supporting details and demonstrate how to transfer them to the note-taking sheet. The class then collaborates to read the entire selection and take notes, and reads over the completed notes together.

Next, teachers have students record their questions about the selection in the left column on the back of their note-taking sheet. Students ask their questions to the teacher or the class and record the correct responses in the right column. Students who did not realize they had questions benefit particularly from this exercise, as it adds to their understanding. It is also a good time to alert students to questions that are likely to appear on a test.

Once students finish their notes, they write a summary of the main ideas. (Summarizing is covered later in this chapter.) The summary may be written on the back of the last sheet of notes if there is space or on a separate sheet with the topic clearly identified.

Mastering the Routine

Mastering note-taking takes ongoing guidance from teachers and regular practice. As students progress in school, reading material becomes longer, more difficult to decode, and more complex. Note-taking also becomes more challenging. However, like any skill, practice breeds confidence and ability. The best way to help students master note-taking is to teach them how to do it, build in daily practice, and increase the complexity as students progress. Letting students use their notes for a test is an excellent motivator, as it allows them to see the direct link between mastery of the skill and performance on the assessment.

Note-Taking from Nontext Sources

Purpose

Note-taking from nontext sources (such as lectures and videos) is an essential academic skill, particularly in high school and college, when content from written sources generally becomes secondary to information and ideas presented in class lectures, discussions, and activities. Students use the same note-taking model they use for written sources, but some aspects differ slightly.