Note Taking
Contributors: UWC Staff

How Much Do You Know about Note Taking?
Take this online quiz: http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/notetake/

Note Taking while Reading

Key Ideas:
- Good note taking skills start before the class begins. It is important to read all the required assignments ahead of time. Lectures are designed to supplement the reading assignments, not replace them.
- Bring questions and important ideas with you to class. When you participate in the class discussion and ask the professor questions, you are more likely to remember the material.

Note Taking while Reading Methods

1. Write Notes in the Margins
As you read through the text, write summative phrases or important characters in the margins of the text. If you are borrowing or renting a book, use sticky notes. You can use reflective questions to guide writing these phrases, such as “What was the main idea?”

2. Highlight Key Phrases in the Text
After you read a paragraph or a section, selectively highlight key terms and phrases. If you are borrowing or renting a book, use removable colored tape. Highlighting without clarifying the purpose of the highlight (such as writing notes in the margin) has proven to be dramatically less effective.

3. Write Notes on a Separate Paper
Use one of the lecture note taking methods listing in the next section of this resource. As you read through the text, take notes on the important characters, key events, and main ideas.

Note Taking during a Class Lecture

Key Ideas:
- Write down the main ideas in phrases that you will remember. Do not be concerned with writing down every word or sentence of the lecture.
- If the professor is using a PowerPoint during the lecture, ask if s/he would be willing to share a printed or electronic copy with the students in the class. Professors may also post PowerPoint presentations on WebCampus before class; if this is the case, print out the note taking version and bring it with you.
Note Taking Methods

1. Outlining System
Organize the main points of the lecture with supporting ideas indented under each generalized main idea. The major, most general topics are the farthest to the left while the supporting details are indented. Roman numerals, number, or dashes are not required but may be helpful depending on your own personal organization style.

Example:

2. Cornell System
Draw a line down the left side of your paper, creating two columns. Paraphrase important points from the lecture in the larger column on the right (“note-taking column”). After the completion of the lecture, write key words in the left column (“cue column”). It may be helpful to think of the notes in question format, and the key words in the cue column are the answers. At the bottom of the paper, write a few sentences in the “summary area” that explain the main topics. This method is designed to help you use critical thinking skills to process your notes and increase your likelihood of remembering the material.

Example:
http://lsc.cornell.edu/LSC_Resources/cornellsystem.pdf

3. Charting System
Before the lecture begins, label several columns at the top of your paper; choose the appropriate labels based on the subject. During the lecture, write important information under each heading. This method can help you focus on and record the key facts of the lecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>IMPORTANT PEOPLE</th>
<th>EVENTS</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>FDR</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>INvolvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Mapping System
This system is designed for the visual student and uses a creative organization style. Write the main idea in the center of the paper and draw lines to supportive topics. You may add numbers or colors to link common ideas.

**Example:** [http://www.tonybuzan.com/about/mind-mapping/](http://www.tonybuzan.com/about/mind-mapping/)

**Reviewing Your Notes**
Review your notes at least once per week throughout the semester. Students remember a significantly higher amount of information during a mid-term or final exam if they have regularly reviewed their notes compared with students who did not regularly review their notes.

**Additional Resources & Reference List:**
- [http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/notetakingsystems.html](http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/notetakingsystems.html)
- [http://www.sl.psu.edu/Documents/Note_Taking_Strategies.pdf](http://www.sl.psu.edu/Documents/Note_Taking_Strategies.pdf)
- [http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/enreadtp/Cornell.html](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/enreadtp/Cornell.html)
FORMAT FOR THE OUTLINE METHOD OF NOTE-TAKING

Title or Topic

I. Main topics will be the main headings (to the left side of the paper near the margin)
   A. Major sub-topics (indented and subordinate to the preceding heading)
      1. Minor sub-topic (indented under A)
      2. Minor sub-topic (indented under A)
         a. Detail (under 2)
         b. Detail
   B. Major sub-topic (indented the same as major sub-topic A)
      1. Minor sub-topic
         a. Detail (under 1)
         b. Detail

II. Continue in the same way with main topic #2, #3, etc.
**#2 Example of Cornell System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue Column</th>
<th>Note Taking Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Record: During the lecture use the note taking column to record lecture using telegraphic sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Questions: As soon after class as possible, formulate questions based on the notes in the right-hand column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, establish continuity, and strengthen memory. Also, the writing of questions sets up a perfect stage for exam-studying later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Recite: Cover the note taking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the question and cue column only say aloud, in your own words, the answers to the questions, facts, or ideas indicated by the cue-words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Reflect: Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: “What’s the significance of these facts? What principle are they based on? How can I apply them? How do they fit in with what I already know? What’s beyond them?”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Review: Spend at least ten minutes every week reviewing all your previous notes. If you do, you’ll retain a great deal for current use, as well as, for the exam.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

After class, use this space at the bottom of each page to summarize the notes on that page.
#2 Example of Cornell System

**John Q. Student**  
**Biology 101**  
**April 1, 2000**

- **Phylum**  
  - **Arthropods**  
  - **subphylum**  
  - **Chelicerata**

- **Chelicerata**  
  - **examples**

- **Prosoma**  
  - sensory, feeding, and locomotor tagma

- **Opisthoma**

- **Chelicerae**
  - pincerlike or chelate
  - used for feeding
  - first pair of appendages

- **Pedipalps**
  - second pair of appendages
  - used for sensory purposes

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Phylum arthropods is made up of subphylum chelicerata. Subphylum chelicerata is characterized by two parts called prosoma and opisthoma. The prosoma and cephalothorax are sensory, feeding, and locomotor tagma. The chelicerae is the first appendage and refers to the pincerlike

The pedipalps are the 2nd pair of appendages, and they are used for sensory purposes: feeding, locomotion, and reproduction.
#3 Example of Charting System

Scientific Revolution: Chart of Scientists

Directions: Take bullet notes from the paragraphs attached and PowerPoint presentation in the following columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Years</th>
<th>Area of Science</th>
<th>Traditional Belief</th>
<th>Experiments</th>
<th>New Ideas</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galileo Galilei (1564-1652)</td>
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<td>William Harvey (1578-1657)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaac Newton (1643-1727)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
#4 Example of Mapping System
