

Taking Notes Using 2-Column Note-taking Template

Now that you have gathered your sources, it's time to read and take notes.

Before you take information from any source, you should have a Bibliography Template for that source and have a code number in the upper right hand corner. Alternately, you may use the chart at the bottom of the 2-Column Note Template. Number each of your sources.

Any note with information from that source should have the same code number in the Source # column on your template.

Note-taking Information

Place Topic Headings in the first column. Cluster notes relating to a particular heading together. You can have several headings on one sheet.

Record only one piece of information on each line of the 2-Column Note Template. Insert more lines as you add more notes.

You should not use complete sentences. Words, phrases, and fragments are fine---just as long as you can understand later what you have written.

Three kinds of information are appropriate for notes:

- A. **Facts.** Record accurately!
- B. **General information.** If reading through material gives you an idea, write the idea in your own words.
- C. **Specific information.** If you read something which is worded just the way you would like it to appear on your paper, copy it exactly. Enclose the material in quotation marks.

In all cases be sure to record the page number where you found the information.

Finding Information in Sources

Skimming helps you search for specific information. Here's how to skim for information if your source is a book:

- A. Turn to the index at the back of the book or to the table of contents at the front. Look for headings related to your topic and research areas.
- B. When you find a heading that seems useful, turn to the page(s) listed and skim to see if that page or section of the book has the information you want.
- C. Force your eyes to move very quickly until you find the information you want or you decide that it is not there. In non-book sources, read the subheadings carefully to determine if that section will be useful. In scanning paragraphs, pay special attention to the first and last sentence.

Kinds of Notes

Your notes will contain a variety of information: facts or statistics, direct quotations, paraphrases, and summaries.

Facts or Statistics:

A note can record a brief fact or statistic that you want to remember. Do not write a complete sentence when you record such information.

Direct Quotations:

Sometimes you will find a writer's words so vivid or effective that you decide you might want to quote it in your paper. In your note, copy the quote exactly---word for word---just as the writer wrote it, and enclose the quoted material in quotation marks so that you remember the wording isn't yours! In general, direct quotes should be brief and should be used sparingly throughout the paper.

Paraphrasing:

When you paraphrase, you restate the writer's ideas in your own words. A paraphrase briefly covers every idea in the same order as in the original. Even though you are not copying the writer's exact words, you are "kidnapping" the writer's ideas, and unless you give credit to the original writer, you are plagiarizing. You will need to cite the author and the page number in your paper if you paraphrase that author's thoughts or ideas.

Summarizing:

When you summarize something, you restate the main ideas in your own words. A summary does not give all the details---only the most important ones.

Review the key steps:

1. Write the source number in Source # column.
2. Write a heading for the note—it might be a heading or subheading on your outline.
3. Write only one bit of information on each line. Cluster together notes with the same heading. Add lines as you need.
4. Take notes by:
 - recording brief fact or statistic
 - quoting directly—enclose information in quotation marks
 - paraphrasing
 - summarizing
5. Write the page number in the Page # column.