

## Recording Research Notes (Teacher Background Notes)

Recording information accurately and systematically is an important research skill. Properly done, this step will save students a great deal of time when they prepare their final product or presentation. Note taking should not be made a tedious process. Encourage students to develop their own styles or "tricks" in the context of certain general guidelines. Periodically ask students to produce their notes for assessment or feedback rather than only evaluating the final product.

### General Recommendations

- Give students frequent opportunities to practise picking out key words as they read or listen.
- Encourage students to develop creative ways of keeping their inquiry question(s) in mind as they conduct their research (sticky notes, reminder images, et cetera).
- Teach students about intellectual property and plagiarism. The word "plagiarism" comes from a Latin word meaning "kidnap"; a plagiarist is one who makes off with another person's ideas or takes credit for someone else's work. Correct note-taking will help students avoid plagiarism.
- Offer students the chance to share with their peers tricks or methods that they have found helpful (e.g., colour coding, abbreviations, et cetera).
- Provide students with note-taking frames (print or electronic) to help them organize and record notes. These frames may be designed with student input.
- Some students may prefer to organize notes using an outline format; others may prefer a web or map. Give them the opportunity to practise both styles, emphasizing that they must be organized by topic and linked sub-topics.
- Introduce students to the four basic types of notes, providing examples of each:
  - Paraphrase (P)
  - Summary (S)
  - Quote (Q)
  - Comment (C)

### Guidelines for Recording Notes

- Keep your research question in mind.
- Develop a list of key words or expressions.
- Use 5" X 7" note cards or separate sheets for each topic. If you are using an electronic file, use a chart or table to divide topics or sub-topics.
- Label all notes with a topic or sub-topic at the top of the page.
- While you are doing your research, record reference details at the bottom of each note card or sheet. This way, it will be easier to refer back to your sources.
- Distinguish fact from opinion as you take notes.
- Do not bother to write in complete sentences unless you are quoting. If you are quoting, cite all reference details directly after the quote.
- Be careful about spelling.

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### Note-Taking Models

- Cornell Notes divide the page into two columns: one for notes, and one for personal comments.
- Students may have input in designing a model that works for them.

Following is an example of a model or template for a note-taking card.

<b>Sub-Topic:</b> _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Point form</li><li>• Key words only</li><li>• Underline important ideas or key words</li><li>• Be careful about spelling</li><li>• Fact or opinion?</li><li>• Record sources below as you go</li><li>• Label <b>S</b> (summary) <b>P</b> (paraphrase) or <b>Q</b> (quote)</li></ul>
<b>Comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal ideas here</li><li>• Use your own words—don't steal ideas</li></ul>
<b>Source:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• web address, site name, page title, date</li><li>• author, title, year, page</li></ul>

An example of a point form note-taking exercise is available online at the following educational website:

*Canada, Our Home and Native Land* (2001), consulted 15 July 2005:

<<http://homeandnativeland.net/pointform.htm>>