

Teacher Notes: Recording Research 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 practice picking out keywords 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 helpful tricks or methods with each other (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:
 - o Paraphrase (P)
 - o Summary (S)
 - o Quote (Q)
 - o Comment (C)

Guidelines for Recording Notes:

- Keep your research question in mind.
- Develop of list of keywords or expressions.
- Use 5X7 note cards or separate sheets for each topic. If 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.
- Record reference details as you go 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** use complete sentences, unless you are quoting. If you are quoting, cite all reference details directly after the quote.
- Be careful about spelling. (Encourage students to use Canadian spelling.)

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Note-Taking Models:

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

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

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

In-text Quotations

In-text quotations should be set within quotation marks, or typed in italics and single-spaced. The source should always be cited immediately following the quotation (Menzies, 1994, p. 23) or, for websites, the page title, URL, and access date in parentheses as follows:

UN High Commission for Refugees, Basic Facts,
<www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/basics> (3 Feb.04). If the author's name is indicated on the web page, list the name first.