

TEXT NOTE TAKING

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Taking notes on assigned readings is not as common a practice as it should be. Taking notes on what you read is extremely essential to your success in this class. Periodically I will check reading notes (outlines) for a grade. If you are not sure what will work, or what may help you, here are some highly recommended suggestions.

Strategies

Read before taking notes.

- *While it is not necessary to read the entire chapter before taking notes, you must finish titled sections or long paragraphs before selecting main ideas and paraphrasing. It is difficult to know what to record unless you have enough information from which to choose.*

Know what to record.

- *Identify major topics based on section headings. Try to pick out one major idea per paragraph along with a few supporting details. Look for words in bold print or italics.*

Be selective in what you record.

- *Remember that the goal of note taking is to produce a shortened version of the reading. This is a skill that improves with practice.*

Use your own words.

- *Information should be paraphrased before it is recorded in notes. The time spent trying to understand a passage and recording the main ideas in your own words is the single most important investment of time you can make. The chances of remembering are greater if the work is in your own words.*

Work quickly and efficiently.

- *Note taking need not be, and should not be, painful and time consuming. Read, think, write, and move on.*

Use an appropriate form of organization.

- *Select a form of organization that will permit quick and active recall of the main points. The form should also allow you to see associations among ideas. The Cornell Method is perfect for this.*

- *Write on your own paper. There is not enough space to take notes on handouts.*
- *Don't be stingy with paper. Skip lines or leave spaces for adding information or writing questions later.*
- *Be cautious when loaning your notes to another student. Give him/her a copy instead of your notebook. Lost notes are irreplaceable.*
- *Make your own notes. You may want to supplement your notes with those of another student, but don't rely solely on notes taken by someone else. The notes may not be as complete or as accurate as your own, you may not understand another person's shorthand or symbols, and another person may not record things s/he already knows but you don't.*
- *Always date your notes. Dating helps one to find certain pieces of information and to organize notes.*
- *Always put page numbers on your notes. This is useful if notes are dropped and scrambled out of order.*
- *If you recopy or reorganize notes, be sure to renumber and re date the pages.*
- *Remember to take a break when you need it!*