

Note-Taking From Texts



Aim

- To take notes from a range of texts.

Why Take Notes?

To gather information about a specific topic.

To use within a piece of writing at a later date.

To analyse a text.

To revise for a test.

Where Do I Begin?

- When you first open a book, especially for a complex subject, it can be very intimidating.
- The idea that you have to look at all this information and pick out the important parts can be very overwhelming.
- Where do I start?
- How do I know which information is important?
- How can I shorten the sentences?

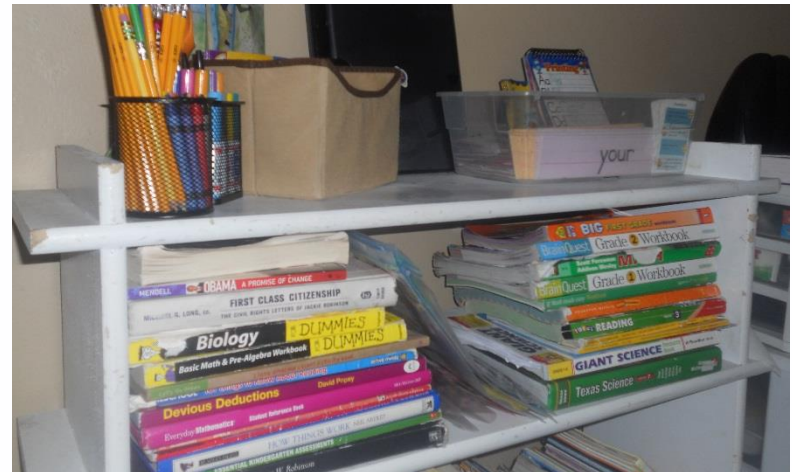
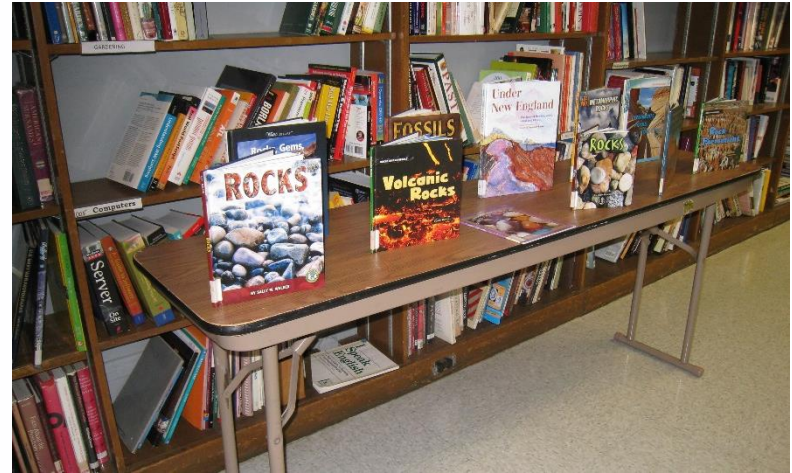


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Don't Panic!

There are a few different tricks and tools that you can use to make this easier.

Find out what you need to know.

Examine the pictures and headings.

Read and take notes on one subheading at a time.

Take regular brain breaks.

Make helpful notes.

Find out What You Need to Know

In most textbooks or non-fiction books, there are features that help you to pinpoint the important sections of the chapter:

Objectives, glossaries and review questions all show you what is meant to be taken from the chapter. Examine these first, and you will often get a clear idea of what subjects to watch for in the reading.

As you take your notes, you will write down the answers or definitions for these topics as you read.

Examine the Pictures and Headings

Now that you know what is important here, you can use the pictures and sub-headings to get an idea of the order that topics are covered. Just take a quick glance through the text to see what is coming.

You can use those headings as the main points in an outline format for your notes if you wish.

Take Regular Brain Breaks

Your eyes, brain and body are not designed to maintain the same position and focus for hours at a time. You need to move around and take breaks.

Every hour that you are working, you should get up for 10 minutes and do something else. This could be a walk around the block, talk to your family, stretch or other movement.

If you do this, you should find that you are much more alert and focused.

Read and Take Notes on One Subheading at a Time

Don't try to tackle the entire text at one time and then take notes, you will forget a lot and absorb very little.

Work on one sub-heading at a time.

After reading one section, stop and write down your thoughts and answers to any of the objective/review questions you found. This will help you to remember the material due to the writing process. It will also help to keep your notes organised.

Next move onto another section and repeat.

Take Helpful Notes

1. Scan for key words.
2. Skim for important facts.
3. Write down only the key information.
4. Use abbreviations and symbols for visual reminders and emphasis.
5. Use concept maps.

Let's take a look at these methods:

Scan for Key Words

Think of the important words that link to what you want to find out.

Quickly scan the text for these words.

Only read the parts of the text that contain your key words.

Skim for Important Facts

Once you have found the correct section,
you do not have to read every single word.

Skim over each sentence,
taking in the important facts.

Write down Only the Key Information

**Decide what is most important
and write that down.**

**Only write down key words and phrases;
you do not need to write in full sentences.**

Write down Only the Key Information

What is the key information in the text here:

Life in ancient Egypt was centred largely on agriculture. The majority of the people were involved in farming, and the growing season lasted eight to nine months. Wheat, fruits and vegetables were the principal crops, although there was some pastoral farming of cattle, sheep or goats. Farmers in ancient Egypt worked to reach a level of subsistence so that they could feed themselves and pay their taxes. During the annual flooding of the Nile, which typically lasted from July until November, farming was impossible. But when the waters receded, a thick layer of fertile silt over the farmlands remained, to ensure rich soil for their crops and thick grasses for their grazing animals.

Write down Only the Key Information

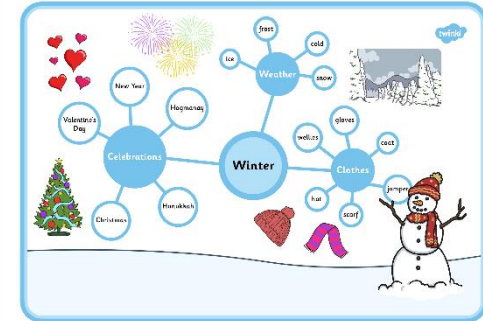
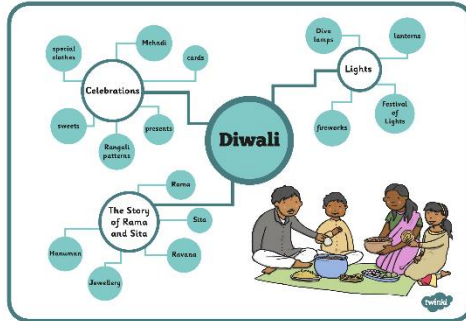
For example:

Life in ancient Egypt was centred largely on agriculture. The majority of the people were involved in farming, and the growing season lasted eight to nine months. Wheat, fruits and vegetables were the principal crops, although there was some pastoral farming of cattle, sheep or goats. Farmers in ancient Egypt worked to reach a level of subsistence so that they could feed themselves and pay their taxes. During the annual flooding of the Nile, which typically lasted from July until November, farming was impossible. But when the waters receded, a thick layer of fertile silt over the farmlands remained, to ensure rich soil for their crops and thick grasses for their grazing animals.

Mainly agriculture - growing season – eight to nine months – wheat fruits vegetables - some cattle sheep goats - feed themselves - pay taxes - annual flooding – Nile – July until November - farming impossible – when waters receded – left layer fertile silt - crops - thick grasses for grazing animals.

Use Concept Maps

With a concept map, you are creating a visual setup that helps to explain the relationships between concepts and the main topic.



Would you use a concept map?
What do you like about this method of note-taking?
What are the cons of this method?

Use Abbreviations

Abbreviations are shortened words: 'e.g.' for 'for example', 'info.' instead of 'information'. If you shorten a word, put a full stop at the end of it to show it is an abbreviation.

**Symbols: &, +, =, %, \$, @.
As long as you understand them,
you can make up your own symbols.**



