

Taking Notes

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Background

I was trained in the AVID system which relies heavily on the Cornell Notes strategy. However, when I started teaching the Scholar's World History class at IHS, I realized that the reasoning behind that strategy was not clear.

The Scholar's World History class was a research class, so I needed to research how and why students are supposed to take notes if I was going to teach students to take notes. **This led me through a quite frustrating process of discovering that we, as a profession, do not know how to take notes or teach about notes.**

Most colleges teach their professors and students a very confusing set of instructions with confusing language.

Please feel free to see the Resource Page of my website for all the notes on notes.

Background Continued

It took me about a year to find the breakthrough document. It was a review of all of the academic research on notetaking done for Harvard students and professors.

All of the language in this document really clarifies what is so often missing about instruction about how and why we take notes.

Notes on Note-Taking: Review of Research and Insights for Students and Instructors

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“ Learning occurs during the construction and review of notes, because during both events learners are able to make new connections or strengthen connections between ideas [. . .] The largest factor associated with optimal review is for the learner to transform their notes in some interactive way, rather than simply reading or copying their notes ”

Michael Friedman, PHD

Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching

[LINK TO THIS PAPER](#)

Style

Style is how you choose to write down notes.

TYPES OF STYLES:

- Outline Style
- Word Mapping
- Non-Linear
- Chart Style
- Mixed Styles
- Sentence Style (poor choice)

CONCLUSION: Choose any style you want (except sentence style is the least strong choice as it has a lack of organization).

INTRODUCTION

BODY

I. MAIN POINT

A. Subordinate point (level 1)

1. Subordinate point (level 2)

a. Subordinate point (level 3)

b. Subordinate point (level 3)

i. Subordinate point (level 4)

ii. Subordinate point (level 4)

2. Subordinate point (level 1)

II. MAIN POINT

A. Subordinate point (level 1)

B. Subordinate point (level 1)

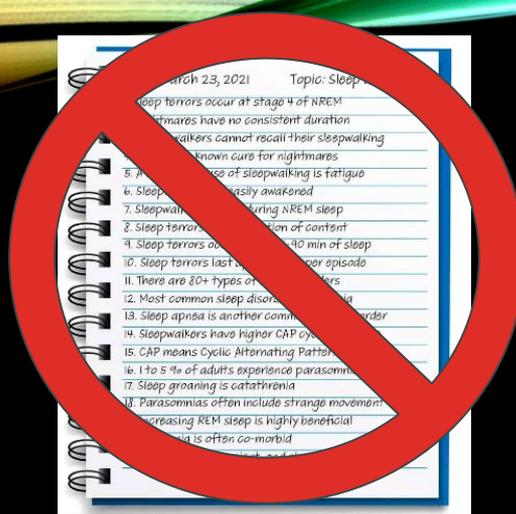
1. Subordinate point (level 2)

2. Subordinate point (level 2)

III. MAIN POINT

CONCLUSION

Outline Style



Sentence Style

Styles

Chart Style

Crash Course

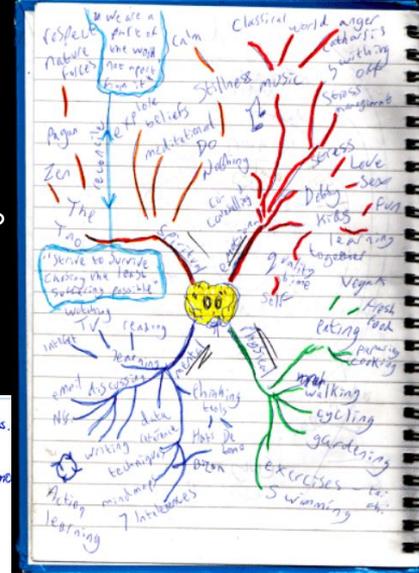
Alexander the Great!

"He want to be great!"

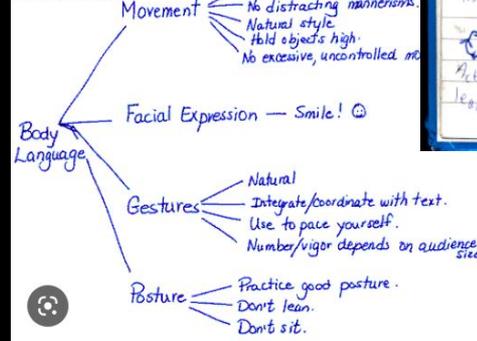
Him	Empire	Accomplishments	Other Comments	Great??
300 BCEish General Died @ 32 Hot Persian wife -murderous	Greco Big Technology speaks "savitas" Not that great - mostly citical.	• lots of land - took over Persia made him "great?"	Napoleon obsessed Women - usually not fused upon and therefore not "Great" Pompey the Great	① Good Empire ② Accomplishments - absolute monarchy - lots of cities - spread culture/language - connected world ③ Legend!! - died early - favored by Aristotle - cool stories ④ Others decided he was great - emulated him

icon because he was a killer?

Non-Linear Styles



Concept Chart



Format

Format is just the container for your notes.

TYPES OF FORMATS:

- Cornell
- 2 Page Format
- Self-Created Formats
-

CONCLUSION: Cornell Notes are a great format, and they always win when research is due with them. They allow ANY STYLE.

Walter Pauk invented Cornell Notes in 1950 at Cornell University and the original Cornell notes allowed any style in the right box.

https://ia600308.us.archive.org/30/items/howtostudyincol100pauk_1/howtostudyincol100pauk_1.pdf

Questions:	Notes:
Move to Change & Reform	→Nicholas I, tsar between 1852-55, recognized the problem but didn't achieve change. →His son Alexander II came to power and moved forward with reform. The threat of uprising may have encouraged reform but landowners who would clearly lose influence were resistant.
Emancipation Statute Reform	→ Serfs could marry who they wished, own property and set up a business →Peasants were restricted to the maximum allowance of land they could buy
What changes occurred?	→ All serfs became 'obliged peasants' for 2 years while charters were drawn up to decide the areas of land to be given to them. Existing relations between serfs and nobles existed during this time. After 2 years 'obliged peasants' could buy land if the owner wanted to sell it →Peasants had to pay 'redemption dues' annually for 19yrs at 6% interest. Mortgages on land. This was how the Tsar reimbursed nobles for loss of free labor. →The village commune or <i>Mir</i> was made responsible for collecting 'redemption dues' →Alexander II steered the Great Emancipation Statute into Law during Feb 1861. However, the result was a 'series of compromises' that failed to satisfy anyone. → "The so-called 'emancipation' was not really intended to be beneficial to peasants and therefore peasants were not really benefited." → There was deep resentment among peasants. Peasants had not freed everyone. The government had ignored the peasant belief that nobles were responsible for their condition. →The emancipation was 'deeply flawed'. Nobility began to lose their land. Smith (2012) suggests that this was due to growing disillusionment with the regime.
What was the impact of the new emancipation policy? (Cause & Effect)	
Perspectives on the Emancipation	
Increased instability	→Nobles often resented the government's greater investment in heavy industry following 1861. They felt they had to deal with mounting peasant disturbance on their own. →Nobles in Tver suggested the only way to remedy problems was to create an assembly of elected representatives to deal the problems emancipation had created. (Source B - p. 8) →Alexander II's reforms taught that change was possible. Expectations were raised, and when they were not fulfilled, the autocracy was in danger.
Summary: The emancipation of the serfs in Russia, in 1861, meant that the serfs were legally able to marry, vote, leave land and trade. However the terms of the Emancipation Statute did not satisfy either the peasants or the nobles. Whilst technically the status of the peasants improved and serfdom was abolished throughout the Russian Empire, in practice their living conditions changed very little. Emancipation was intended to give Russia economic and social stability and thus prepare the way for its industrial and commercial growth. But it ended in failure. It both frightened the privileged classes and disappointed the progressives.	

Bad Sentence Style notes :(

QUESTIONS
GRA #1

Cornell Format

NOTES

SUMMARY
GRA #2

Generative Activity

The most important idea in the Friedman document is that learning is a process associated with "Generative Activities."

They are the reader making something new in their own words

They are the process of making meaning (i.e., "generating" knowledge)

THEREFORE, taking notes, in which you create paraphrases of the content is a **GENERATIVE ACTIVITY**. The note taker should therefore learn.

Writing down notes in which you make no meaning, like writing down all of the words, is **NOT GENERATIVE** and learning should be minimal.

Generative Review Activity

Adding on to the idea of "Generative Activities," Friedman's article adds the idea of "Generative Review Activity."

Generative Review Activities are review processes that also generate learning.

They are the process of making meaning while reviewing notes (i.e., "generating" knowledge by creating something)

THEREFORE, making a summary or flashcards or a Venn Diagram, in which the student creates something new to review the material is a **GENERATIVE REVIEW ACTIVITY**. The note taker should therefore **learn**. . . again.

Looking at notes in which you make nothing new, is **NOT GENERATIVE** and learning should be minimal.

OLAVARRI REQUIREMENTS

STYLE

Any style (you choose)

Any length

Encourage non-linear styles

If you are not scoring well, take longer notes.

FORMAT

Any format (you choose)

Recognize that Cornell format often wins because it has room for multiple Generative Review Activities.

Leave space to do things to your notes later.

Generative Review Activities

Students **MUST** do 2 GRAs per each note. (they choose)

OLAVARRI GENERATIVE REVIEW ACTIVITIES

3 minutes each. 2 required per notes. Student chooses.

RECOMMEND: One before the test. One before the exam.

SUMMARY (3 sent)

QUESTIONS (3/page)

MULT CHOICE (3/notes)

FLASHCARDS (8/notes) **

ANNOTATE NOTES (all)

VENN DIAGRAM (3 mins)

BIG IMAGE (1 at end)

SMALL IMAGES (3/page)

TIMELINE (1 at end)

BUCKETING (AP Skill)

USE AS CONTEXT (AP Skill)

CONTEXT FOR NOTES (AP Skill)

OUTSIDE EVIDENCE (AP Skill)

SPICET (color code notes)

SPICET (write 3 sentences)

CCOT (AP Skill)

CAUSATION (AP Skill)

5Ws (AP Skill)

MY HOPE

1. Students find their optimal style (or styles) of note-taking.
2. Students find several Generative Review Activities that work for them.
3. Students keep improving with their note-taking and studying skills as they prepare for college.



NOTABLE ISSUES: SENTENCE STYLE NOTES

Students are not currently taught to take notes using the outline style. This was previously a requirement in science classes and it seems to have been dropped (in multiple school districts) since Common Core. Most students take notes now in what is arguably called “sentence style.”

It is just a list of bullets.

It is a bad choice.

WHY? It is missing several Generative Activities while taking notes and has no organizational structure. Kids cannot SEE what their notes are about.

Please encourage your student to use any style other than sentence style.

NOTABLE ISSUES: KIDS HATE NOTES & THAT'S OK

Students tend to complain about notes. . . a lot.

Friedman says that notes ARE LEARNING. We therefore must not avoid notes.

Students should be encouraged to find a style of notes that works for them.

If they are struggling with a class, ask to see their notes and discuss their choices.

Once they have had my class, they should be able to argue WHY they are making certain note-taking choices.

Please encourage your student to take notes.



QUESTIONS?

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