

HOW TO TAKE NOTES FROM RESEARCH READING

This handout is available in an alternative format on request

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO RECORD:

1. **Review:** using your class notes, textbook, encyclopedia, etc. get to know the range of opinions on your topic.
2. **List Subtopics:** this will help you focus your attention and can become labels for notes.
3. **Focus:** choose a component or angle and come up with your research question (it should allow for analysis as well as gathering data). The answer to your research question will become your thesis.

DON'T RECORD TOO MUCH:

1. **Record Only What Is Relevant:** only write down the ideas that are important to your focus.
2. **Summarize:** compress ideas in your own words and only note full quotes that you might use in your essay.
3. **Be Organized:** write down the most important ideas as labels/headings then fill in with sub-points

ORGANIZE YOUR NOTES:

1. **Put Notes on Separate Cards or Sheets:** this will enable you to shuffle the ideas around and group and synthesize them differently to help you brainstorm.
2. **Use Labels/Headings:** label each note with headings for its topic and source, then use sub-headings for subtopics.
3. **Keep Track of Sources:** create a master list of your bibliography, then use a short form to label each note from that source.
4. **Leave Space for Your Ideas:** record your questions, reactions, cross-references as they will be the first part of your brainstorming.