

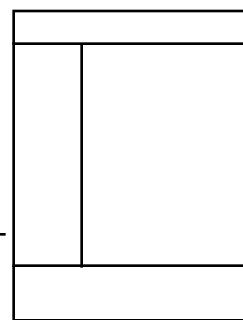
# Introduction: Making Effective and Efficient Notes

**Overview** Good notes must be complete, coherent, and concise. Whether you are reading, listening, or watching, you must be able to make notes quickly in a format that will be helpful later on when you prepare to write, speak, or take a test.

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**Page Layout** Divide the page into sections that serve different purposes. There are four primary spaces you can use to arrange information on the page as the sample page shows:

Connections Column: questions, terms, connections, reminders



— Orienting Info: Name, topic, date

Notes: essential information about the subject you are studying

— Synthesize, respond, reflect, summarize, or connect

## Organize Information

Organize information into a visual format that you find helpful. This might include bullets, dashes, or numbers. Though an outline format is helpful, keep it loose so that you don't get confused as you make notes. Identify and organize information into categories that align themselves with chapters, headings/subheadings, major themes, or chronological events; such organization gives your notes structure and coherence. Use additional techniques such as underlining and ALL CAPS to quickly orient your eyes.

### BENEFITS OF GOOD NOTES

- Improve Recall: Info is better organized which aids the memory when tested.
- Increase Understanding: Organizing info forces you to digest it and establish connections between different ideas.
- Increase Attention: Whether reading or listening, taking good notes forces you to pay close attention to what you are studying. It does this by:
  - establishing a purpose
  - giving you a focus
  - determining what is important

## Abbreviate

You are the only one who must be able to use and read your notes. Each class or topic has words and ideas that come up repeatedly. Using symbols, abbreviations, acronyms, or other tricks to condense your notes helps you get down more information in a useful format. Here are some samples and suggestions:

- Shorten familiar words: info for information; NY for New York; WW2 for World War Two
- Use symbols to represent words or ideas: + for add; = for equal; w/o for without; & for and; b/c for because
- Use acronyms to abbreviate familiar terms: MWH for Modern World History; NATO, GNP, USA, UN, WWI
- Shorten words through omission: gov't for government; bldg. for building; pps for pages; prob for problem.
- Abbreviate names: A = Atticus; BR = Boo Radley; BE = Bob Ewell; FDR = Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- Shorten common terms: RJ=Romeo and Juliet; Eng = English; OLine=Outline; BStorm = Brainstorm

## Telegraph

You do not need to write down every word you read or hear. Cut out unnecessary words. Example: "Atticus takes case" or "Germans lose battle; morale worsens."

## White Space

Don't crowd your page! Leave space between ideas (e.g., leave an extra space between main ideas). This leaves you room to add more information later on and makes your notes easier on the tired eyes trying to read them.

## Set Purpose

Decide *why* you are taking notes so you know how to organize your information and evaluate what you should write down. If, for example, you are making notes for a paper on consequences of a particular historical event, you need to pay special attention to information that might be of possible use. Keep asking yourself: What is the question these notes are trying to help me answer? (e.g., What are the primary consequences of...?)