COMMUNITY OF *CARE*

NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES GUIDE

Name:	
Course:	
Goal:	

How to use this workbook

1. Choose a method that fits the lecture or reading.
2. Practice with the example and blank worksheet.
3. Spend 5-10 minutes after class filling gaps and writing recall questions.
4. Use your notes to test yourself later rather than only rereading them.

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Which method should I use?

If the material is...	Try...
A structured lecture	Outline or Cornell
A fast lecture	Sentence, then reorganize after class
Full of comparisons	Charting
Full of relationships	Mapping or Sketch Notes
A process or decision sequence	Flow Notes
Several distinct themes	Boxing
Something I need to test myself on	Cornell or Split-Page
A textbook or printed article	Annotation

Don't write everything down

Listen for main ideas, definitions, examples, steps, comparisons, causes and effects, repeated information, and anything your instructor emphasizes. Write short explanations in your own words when possible.

My shorthand key

Mark	Meaning	My own example	Meaning
★	Important		
?	Question / unclear		
!	Instructor emphasized		
DEF	Definition		
EX	Example		
→	Leads to / next step		
↔	Connected to		
vs.	Compare / contrast		

Cornell Method

Lectures and exam preparation

How to do it

1. Draw a vertical line about one-third of the way across the page and leave space at the bottom.
2. Take notes in the larger right column using short phrases and examples.
3. After class, add questions or key terms in the left cue column.
4. Cover the right side and answer the cues from memory.
5. Write a two- or three-sentence summary at the bottom.

EXAMPLE A lecture on photosynthesis: notes list stages and inputs; cue column asks 'What happens in the light-dependent reactions?'

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

CUES / QUESTIONS	NOTES / EXPLANATIONS

Summary:

_____

_____

_____

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Outline Method

Lectures with a clear sequence or hierarchy

How to do it

1. Write the main topic at the left margin.
2. Indent major subtopics underneath it.
3. Indent definitions, evidence, and examples one level further.
4. Leave space for additions or corrections.
5. After class, turn each heading into a recall question.

EXAMPLE Civil Rights Movement → major events → causes and consequences.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic:

_____

I. Main idea: _____

A. Supporting idea: _____

1. Detail / example: _____

_____

_____

_____

B. Supporting idea: _____

1. Detail / example: _____

_____

_____

_____

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Mapping Method

Concepts that connect to one another

How to do it

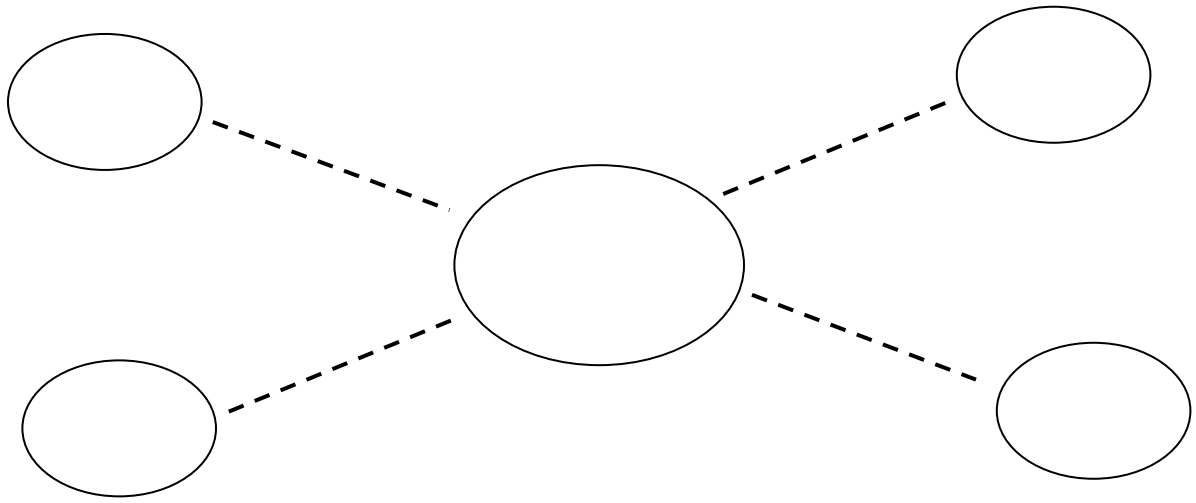
1. Write the main topic in the center.
2. Add branches for major ideas.
3. Add smaller branches for details and examples.
4. Use labeled arrows to show cause, contrast, sequence, or relationship.
5. Explain the whole map without looking at your source.

EXAMPLE Place 'ecosystem' in the center; connect producers, consumers, decomposers, and energy flow.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic:



Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Charting Method

Comparing people, theories, diseases, eras, or processes

How to do it

1. Decide which categories you need to compare.
2. Draw a table with concepts as rows and comparison questions as columns.
3. Fill in concise details during class or reading.
4. Mark missing information with a question mark.
5. Cover a column and try to reconstruct it later.

EXAMPLE Compare three theories by main idea, key terms, evidence, and limitations.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

Concept	Details	Deails	**Example**

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Boxing Method

Grouping distinct ideas on a visually organized page

How to do it

1. Give each major idea its own box.
2. Put a short heading at the top of each box.
3. Add only the essential explanation, example, and question.
4. Connect related boxes with arrows where useful.
5. Review by covering one box and explaining it from memory.

EXAMPLE Separate boxes for causes, symptoms, assessment, and interventions.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

IDEA 1	**IDEA 2**
IDEA 3	**IDEA 4**

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Flow Notes

Processes, decisions, and cause-and-effect

How to do it

1. Write down the starting point.
2. Use arrows to show what happens next or what causes what.
3. Add short labels, diagrams, or conditions along the arrows.
4. Include alternate paths where decisions change the outcome.
5. Recreate the flow from memory after class.

EXAMPLE Infection → immune response → inflammation → symptoms.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

START: _____

↓

NEXT / WHY: _____

↓

NEXT / WHY: _____

↓

NEXT / WHY: _____

↓

NEXT / WHY: _____

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Sentence Method

Fast-paced lectures without an obvious structure

How to do it

1. Number each new important idea.
2. Write one concise sentence for each idea instead of transcribing every word.
3. Leave a blank line when the topic changes.
4. Mark unclear points with a question mark.
5. After class, regroup sentences into themes or an outline.

EXAMPLE 1. The policy changed in 1965. 2. Its implementation varied by state.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

Sentence: _____

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Split-Page / Question Notes

Building study questions while taking notes

How to do it

1. Divide the page into a question column and an explanation column.
2. Write the main explanation on the right.
3. Write a matching question or prompt on the left.
4. Cover the explanations and answer the questions aloud or in writing.
5. Revise any question that is too vague to test your understanding.

EXAMPLE Question: 'Why does this reaction require energy?' Answer: a concise explanation and example.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

CUES / QUESTIONS	NOTES / EXPLANATIONS

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Annotation

Textbooks, articles, and printed readings

How to do it

1. Preview headings and learning objectives before reading.
2. Underline sparingly: mark only claims or details you need.
3. Write a short margin note explaining why a passage matters.
4. Add questions, connections, and brief summaries in your own words.
5. After each section, close the reading and summarize it from memory.

EXAMPLE Beside a paragraph, write 'Main claim: ...', 'Connects to lecture 3', or 'Why?'

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

Reading title / section: _____

What the text says (short quote or paraphrase)	My margin note: question, summary, or connection

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

Sketch Notes

Visual concepts, structures, and memorable relationships

How to do it

1. Choose a few key words rather than full sentences.
2. Draw simple icons, shapes, timelines, or diagrams to represent ideas.
3. Use arrows and labels to show relationships.
4. Add short explanations so the drawings remain meaningful.
5. Test yourself by redrawing the diagram without looking.

EXAMPLE Sketch the heart's chambers and draw arrows for blood flow; artistic skill is not required.

Try it now

Choose one topic from a current course and use the method in the space below.

My topic: _____

Turn these notes into studying

Write two questions you should be able to answer without looking:

1. _____
2. _____

After-Class Notes Check

Spend 5-10 minutes reviewing your notes while the class is still fresh. This is a suggested routine, not a strict deadline.

- Fill in incomplete or confusing sections.
- Circle anything I need to ask my instructor or a classmate.
- Add 3-5 questions that my notes should help me answer.
- Write a 2-3 sentence summary in my own words.
- Schedule a short review and answer the questions without looking.

My next review

Course / topic: _____

Next review date: _____ Method I will use: _____

Three questions from today's notes

1.

_____

_____

_____

2.

_____

_____

_____

3.

_____

_____

_____

My Note-Taking Experiment

Try two methods in the same course or in two similar classes. Evaluate how well each helped you organize, understand, and study the material.

	Method A	**Method B**
Method used		
Class / topic		
Easy to keep up during class?		
Easy to understand afterward?		
Easy to turn into study questions?		
What would I change?		

My plan for next week

The method I want to use: _____

One change I will make to improve my notes: _____

_____

_____

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