

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Topic: Note-Taking

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Note-taking

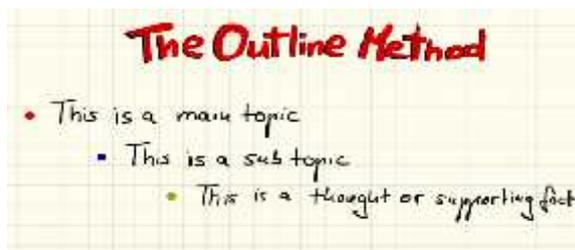
Note-taking is one of the most important activities for students. There are a variety of reasons for it but we only want to highlight the most important one here: Taking notes will help you recall information that would otherwise be lost. And we all know how crucial that can be when we are preparing for an exam. What is the essence of this figure again? Note-taking to the rescue. But taking notes the right way isn't as easy as it sounds. It isn't simply about jotting down everything that you hear.

One thing that most of the successful students have in common is that they use a note-taking method. A note-taking method will help you to prepare before the lecture and to review key concepts after a class. It will help you to stay focused during the lecture to pay attention and actively participate. It will help you to organise your notes properly so that you don't have to worry about losing the overview once you get back to them to prepare for an exam. In this article, we give an overview of the best note-taking methods for you, on how to apply them and when you should or shouldn't use them.

Note-taking methods

1: The Outline method

The Outline method is one of the best and most popular note-taking methods for college students. It lets you organize your notes in a structured form, helping you save a lot of time for further reviewing and editing. As the name suggests, this method requires you to structure your notes in form of an outline by using bullet points to represent different topics and their subtopics. Start writing main topics on the far left of the page and add related subtopic in bullet points below using the indents.



Pros of The Outline method

- Highlights the key points of the lecture in a logical way
- Ease of use allows the students to focus
- Reduces the reviewing and editing time
- Gives a proper and clean structure to your notes

Cons of The Outline method

- Not suitable for subjects like chemistry and math that comprise of formulas and charts
- Doesn't work well if the attended lecture doesn't follow a certain structure

2: The Cornell Method

It is a unique note-taking method that finds its application in a variety of situations. What differentiates it from other methods is the page layout. The page is divided into three or four sections starting from one row at the top for title and date (optional) and one at the bottom along with two columns in the center. 30% of width should be kept in the left column while the remaining 70% for the right column.



All notes from the class go into the main note-taking column. The smaller column on the left side is for comments, questions or hints about the actual notes. After the lecture, you should take a moment to summarise the main ideas of the page in the section at the bottom which will speed up your reviewing and studying process immensely. The best part is that many of you already remember and digest the information while they write a summary like this.

Pros of Cornell Method

- A quicker way to take, review, and organize your notes
- Summarizes all the information in a systematic manner
- Helps in effective learning as it enables to absorb information in a shorter time
- Helps you to extract main ideas
- Cuts down time for reviewing

Cons of Cornell

- Pages need to be prepared before a lecture
- Requires some time for reviewing and summarising the key concepts

3. The Boxing Method

This method might be still widely unknown but gains increasing popularity. All notes that are related to each other are grouped together in a box. A dedicated box is assigned for each section of notes which cuts down the time needed for reading and reviewing. iPad note-taking apps are especially helpful for this method because content on the page can be reordered or resized subsequently. That way, you can just write down notes as you would normally do and then reorder them afterward to assign them to particular boxes. Digital note-taking also allows you to zoom in on the page, which helps to focus on one topic at a time during the review.



Pros of The Boxing Method

- Segregates and organizes your notes in the form of boxes
- Let's you focus on one box at a time while reading
- Help you memorize the relation between notes in a visual way
- Perfect for people that take notes on an iPad

Cons of Boxing Method

- Not suitable for every type of lecture
- Doesn't work well if no overall topics can be assigned to a group of notes
- Requires additional time to group the notes in the end or during the lecture

4. The Charting Method

It is an ideal method for notes that involve a lot of information in the form of facts and statistics, that need to be learned by heart. The information will be organized in several columns, similar to a table or spreadsheet. Each column represents a unique category which makes the rows easily comparable. A good example of the charting method would be a summary of this Topic.

| Method | Description | When to use | Pros | Cons |
|----------|-------------|-------------|------|------|
| Outline | | | | |
| Cornell | | | | |
| Boxing | | | | |
| Charting | | | | |

Pros of The Charting Method

- Information is clearly structured
- Fantastic for reviewing

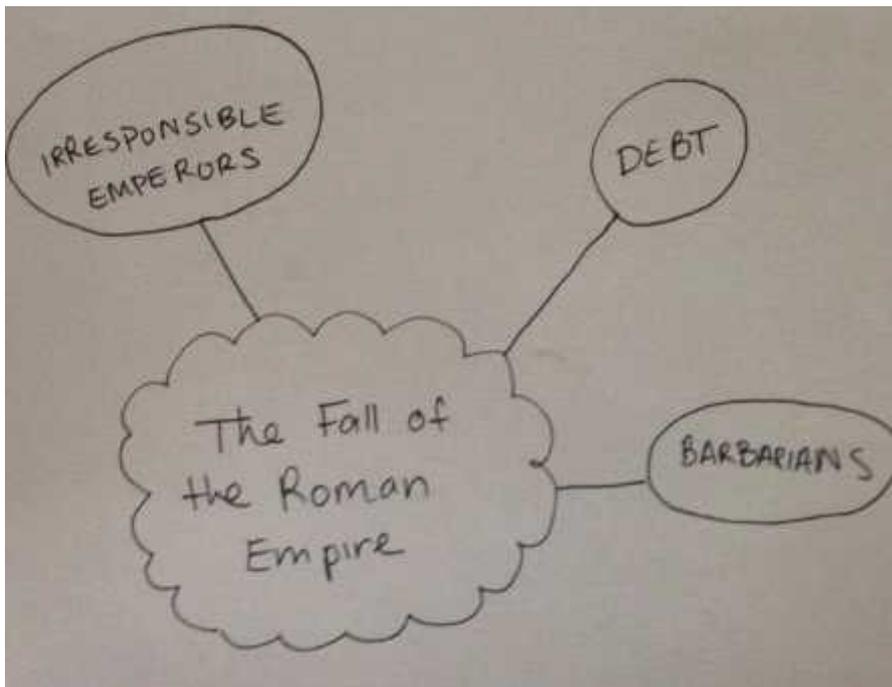
- Notes are easily comparable
- A lot of information can be memorized rather quickly

Cons of The Charting Method

- Very time-consuming method
- Barely makes sense to apply this method in a lecture/class where the content isn't clear beforehand
- Doesn't work for information that can't easily be categorized.

5: The Mapping Method

When the lecture content is intense, the mapping method works best. It helps organize your notes by dividing them into branches, enabling you to establish relationships between the topics. Start with writing the main topic at the top of the map. Keep dividing it into subtopics on the left and right as you go down.



Pros of The Mapping Method

- Visually appealing
- Can be used for noting down detailed information but in a concise form

- Allows easy editing of the notes

Cons of The Mapping Method

- While mapping your notes, you might run out of space on a single page
- Can be confusing if the information is wrongly placed while taking notes

Conclusion

Thus, Note-taking is a crucial part of every student's life and the way you do it can have a great impact on your studies and results. If your notes are messy, it can be difficult to review them and find important information before tests and exams. This is why you should consider these five different methods to take notes effectively. Not only they will deepen your understanding of the information, speed up your revision, and improve your recall but they will also help you stay disciplined and organized, maximizing your chances to fetch good marks.