

## General Note Taking Tips

- **Write clearly.** Consider rewriting your notes to help you organize and remember the information.
- **Include on each sheet,** the date, the subject and the source of information.
- **Don't write down every word,** unless it's a quotation, rule or law.
- **Leave blank spaces** in order to fill in missed information later or to show where ideas or thoughts end.
- **Mark ideas that are unclear.** Write down any questions you have, or anything you would like additional clarification.
- **Use abbreviations** and/or develop your own shorthand system. Look for the list in the back.

## Take Notes From Lecture

There are four key activities to taking notes during a lecture. They are: be prepared, observe, record, and review.

### 1. Be Prepared

- Complete your assignments on-time
- Bring the right materials (pen/paper/notebook)

### 2. Observe

- Watch the instructor's body language
- Watch the instructor's eyes
- When the instructor repeats an idea or uses a key phrase, mark it as important
- If the instructor writes something down, it's probably important, especially diagrams, drawings, definitions, etc.
- Listen for announcement like, "This is important," "This will be on the exam," or "The 4 Main Points are ...."
- Look for non-verbal cues like walking towards the students on major points, pounding on the table, etc
- Be willing to take a risk and ask questions

### 3. Record

There are a variety of different note taking formats to choose from. Choose the format based on your level of comfort with the style and for the type of information to be recorded.

- A. The Cornell Method** - This format is great for pulling out major concepts and ideas.
- Draw a vertical line about 2-3 inches from the left margin of your paper.
  - To the left of the line, write vocabulary or key points
  - To the right of the line take notes.
- B. Mind Mapping** - This format is helpful when visual patterns help you to recall information.
- Box or circle main ideas or points.
  - Draw lines between details and the main ideas.
- C. Outlining** - Organize facts with most general information to the left; more specific information indented to the right.
- D. Free Form** –
- Write one idea per line and skip lines between topics.
  - Use pictures and diagrams
  - Use graphic signals  
**To group info:** Brackets, parenthesis, circles or squares  
**To indicate important points:** use \*, an arrow, or underline  
**To compare ideas:** use +, <, or >

#### 4. Review

- **Review your notes within 10 minutes.** (Within 24 hours, we forget 80% of the information).
  - For one hour of lecture, a review might take 5-10 minutes.
  - This is a great activity to do in a group
- **Edit notes** by completing sentences
- **Use key words** to recite and repeat notes
- **Look for connections.** Ask yourself, “How does this relate to information I already know?” or “Am I unclear on any points?”
- **Type your notes.** (They occupy less space, it can serve as a review, and you can improve your typing skills, a secondary skill).
- **Use different colors**
- **Consider**
  - Having a response column to record your own thoughts and reactions
  - Writing a summary that briefly explains what was covered in class and what you learned.
  - Adding an application column so that examples that demonstrate the application can be noted

## Take Notes On What You Read

- **Get the big picture first.** Glance through chapter headings, section headings and sub headings.
- **Read summary paragraphs** at the end of each section or chapter to get a general idea.
- **Read the entire chapter**, looking for the key points of each paragraph
- **Reading speed depends on our purpose:**
  - Skim pages if you're looking for the general idea.
  - Read slowly if you are looking for details.
- **Finish reading before marking.** You need to understand the full context before you decide what to mark.
- **Consider underlining or using different colors** to distinguish between main and supporting ideas
- **Be very selective** so that when you review, you see only important words or phrases.
- **Use your own words** and jot them in the margins to jog your thinking.
- **Work neatly.** It will make it easier to review.
- **Cross-reference** between pages.
- **Use the margin** to write questions or contextual examples.

## Notes for Papers, Projects, and Presentations

- **Consider using index cards** to take notes for a report, term paper, or presentation.
- **Make a set of bibliography cards**
  - Use one card for each source.
  - Label the resources A, B, C, etc.
  - Include the author, title, date, call number, and where you found the source
- **Make a set of note cards.**
  - Write only one quotation, fact or idea on each card.
  - Use quotation marks if you copy anything directly from the source. List the page numbers of the resource. Label the card to match the bibliography card.
  - Fill out the cards carefully. Make sure all dates, names, etc, are correct.
  - Write a heading or the main topic of the note.
  - Sort the cards by heading or topic.
  - You can also use index cards to organize your notes and study for a test.
- **For presentations, use the note cards on a key ring.** This helps to keep your presentation in order, even if you're nervous and drop them.

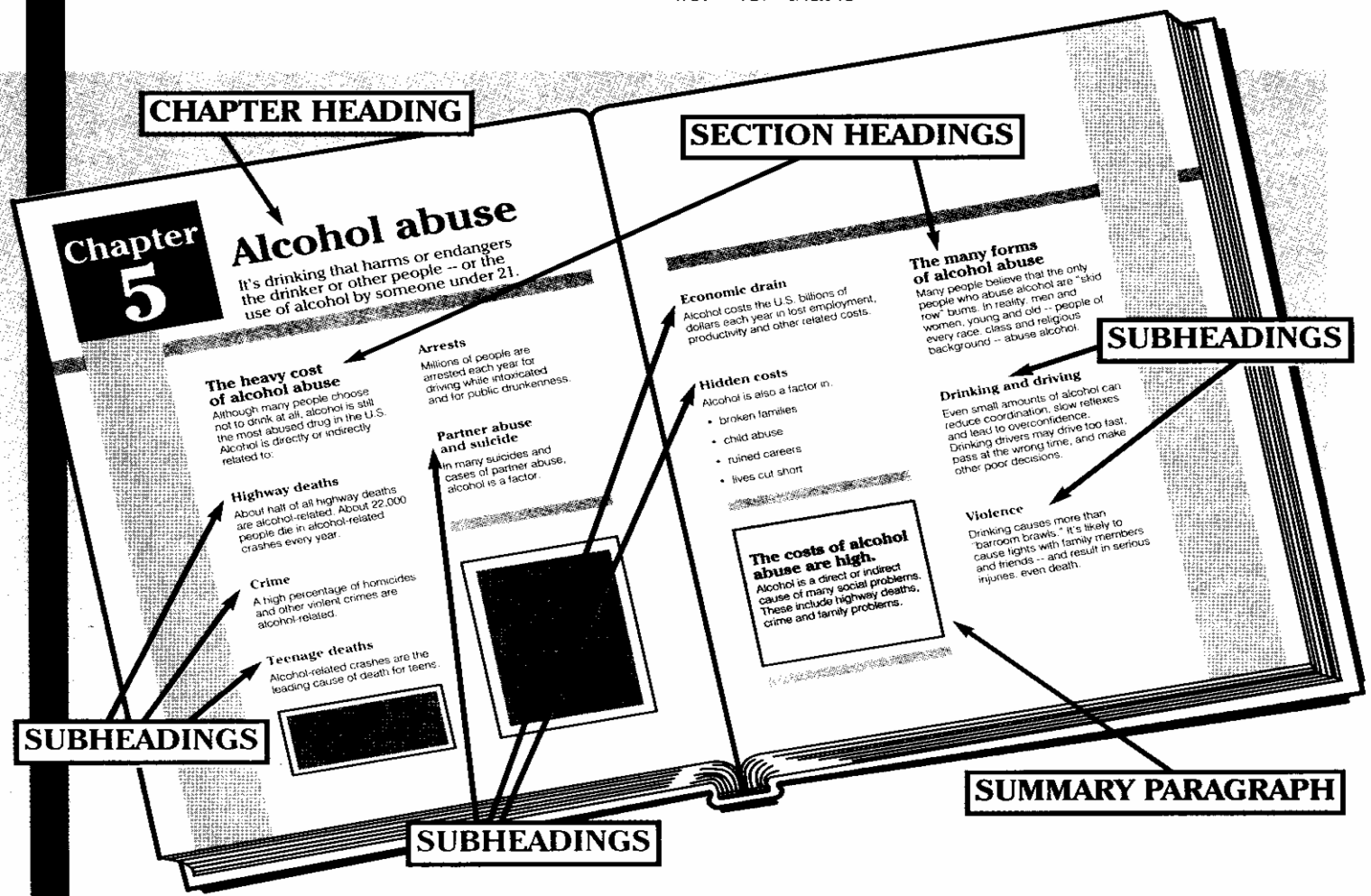
**Develop your own shorthand system.**

**Abbreviate words by:**

- dropping middle letters  
-- such as "cont'd" (continued)
- dropping endings of words  
-- such as "Oct." (October).

**Use common symbols, such as:**

- c. -- for "about"
- cf. -- for "compare"
- fg. -- for "following"
- i.e. -- for "that is"
- e.g. -- for "for example"
- w. -- for "with"
- w/o -- for "without."



**Taking notes from books or articles:**

1. Get the "big picture" first. Glance through chapter headings, section headings and subheadings.
2. Read summary paragraphs at the end of each section or chapter to get a general idea.
3. Then read the entire chapter, looking for the key points of each paragraph.

**Reading speed depends on your purpose:**

- Skim pages if you're looking for the general idea.
- Read slowly if you're looking for details.