



Note-taking techniques

Here are some specific techniques to help make us note-taking masters. Remember, it's important to try multiple ways so you can see if there is one technique over another which works for you.

Here we'll cover some of the more conventional techniques.

Outline

The 'outline' method uses a logical top-down approach with numbered and indented sections targeting the key points. For example, using the Study Smart website as an example for breaking down the key points, the outline might look like this:

1. Study Smart Content
 - a. Successful Study Skills
 - i. Attending Lectures and tutorials
 1. Note-taking
 - Why take notes
 - Approaches to learning
 - Note-taking techniques
 - Transforming notes
 - Visual thinking
 - General note-taking advice

Cornell notes/Origami system

Cornell notes is an evolved version of the outline method, and rather than using numbers and indents, it sections content into different areas on a page. This can be a very useful method, especially for those who like to jump around more and don't like the rigid structure of the outline method but still prefer written notes.

Two key popular versions of this are the basic template (Figure 1) and the origami method (Figure 2).

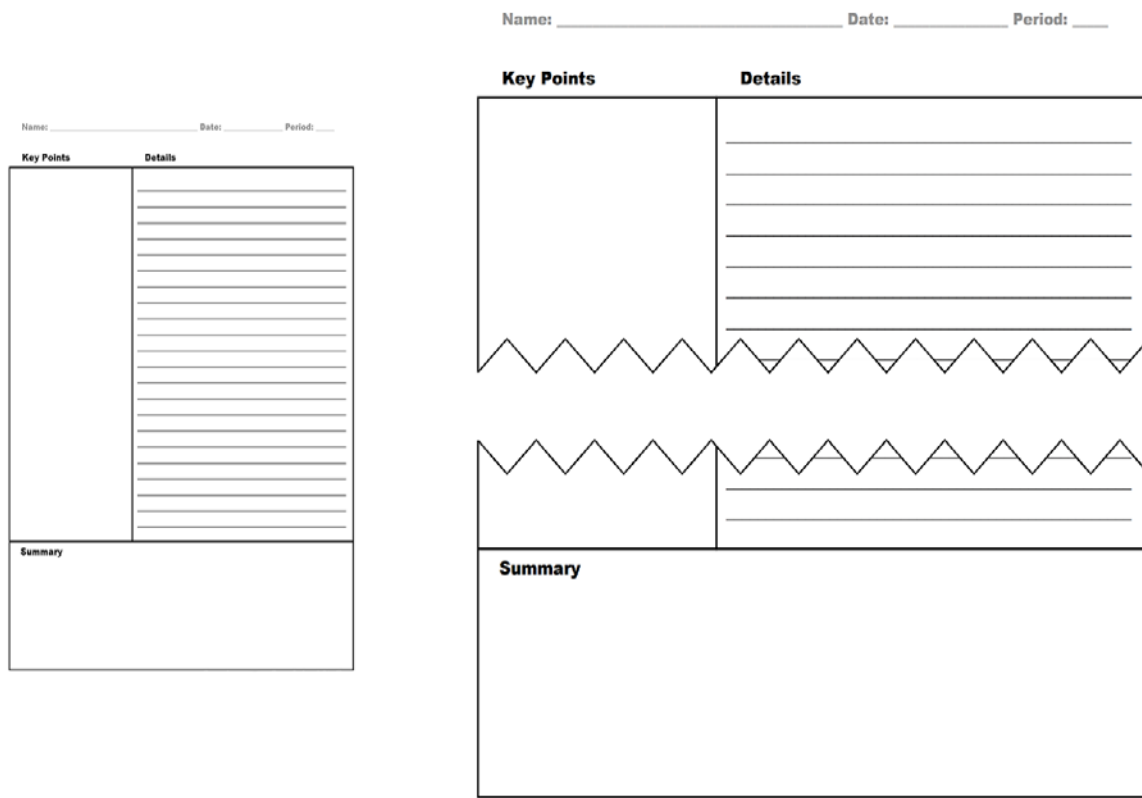


Figure 1. Cornell notes basic template (Freeology, 2011). Copyright 2011 by Freeology.

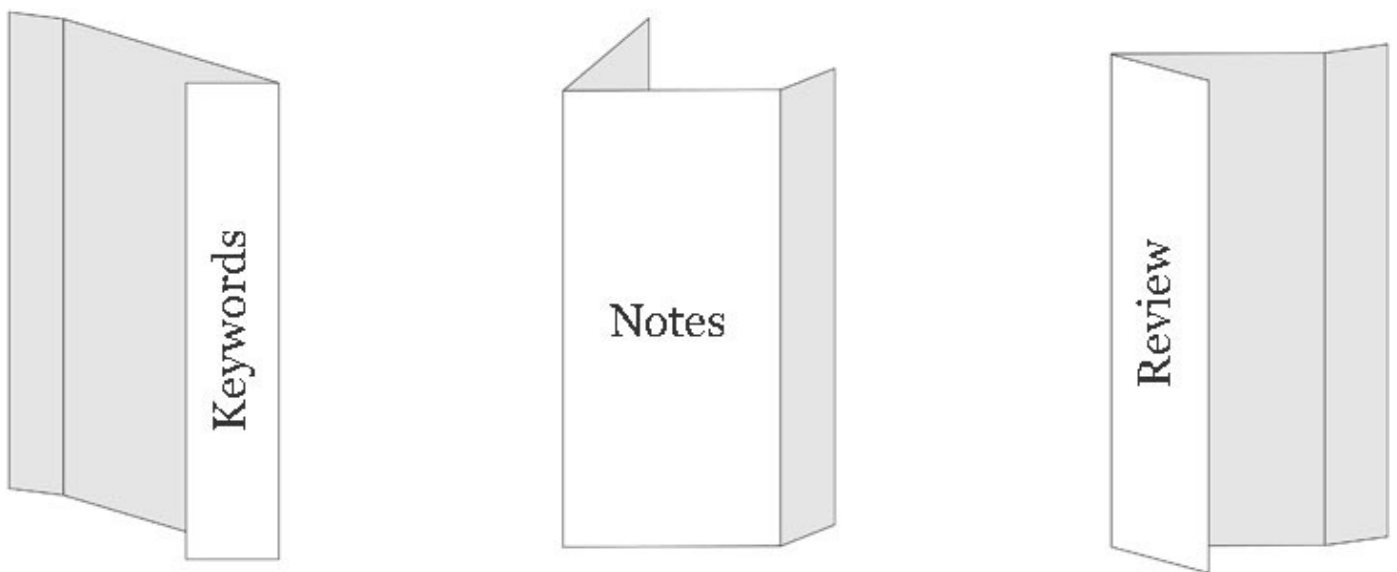


Figure 2. Cornell Notes Origami template (Fuchigami, 2013). Copyright 2013 by L. Fuchigami.

Within the Cornell method all formats are based around the premise that you have a keyword section, a details/notes section, and then a summary section of the page. The Origami method involves folding the paper, whereas the basic template involves drawing lines to divide the page into sections.

T-Note method

The 'T-note' or 'T-method' is a variation of the original Cornell method. While being adaptable for a range of different disciplines, it's particularly helpful for scientific and mathematical equations. You have the key point (or equation) in the left column and then the definition (or working) in the right column. Figure 3 shows an example of how to set up for T-notes. Note the similarity to the above Cornell method. The University of British Columbia's (2011) [Note-taking skills](#) video (3:05) covers useful approaches to note-taking and provides a good overview on T-notes.

<TITLE> Example of T-notes	
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Idea / Point / Equation / Formula	Description of the information presented and an explanation of what that might involve. Or potentially the working of an equation/formula
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Figure 3. T-notes example.

Concept map/Mind map

Mind maps are not necessarily anything new, and most university students have done one during their educational journey (see Figure 4). They may be a good option for you to be able to explore your ideas compared to more structured, text-based approaches. Learning Fundamentals (2016) provides some **good examples of mindmaps**.

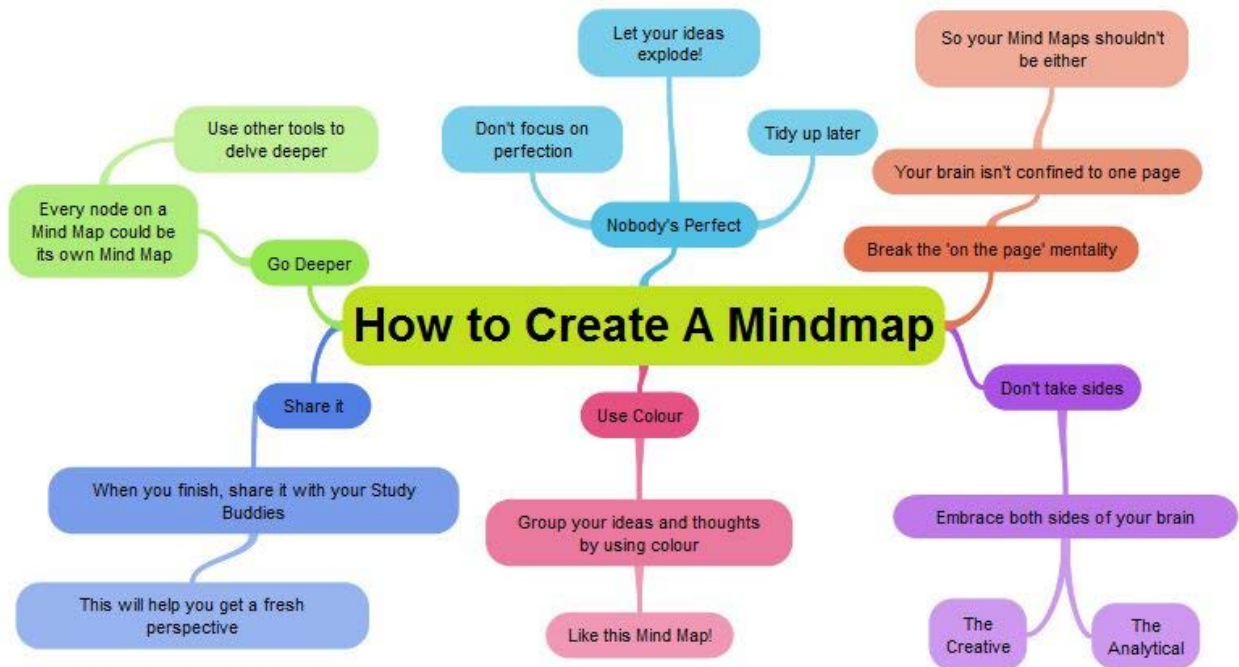


Figure 4. Mind map example (Leyden, 2012). Copyright 2012 by A. Leyden.

Sketchnote

If you don't find words alone are enough and still feel restricted by mind maps, then the Sketchnote approach may be perfect for you. There are some great resources online to help you learn the art of sketchnoting. Try **Sketchnoting 101** (Magain, 2012) and **Sketchnotes 101** (Berman, 2012) to get you started. We'll explore this technique further in **Visual Thinking** (PDF, 108 kB).

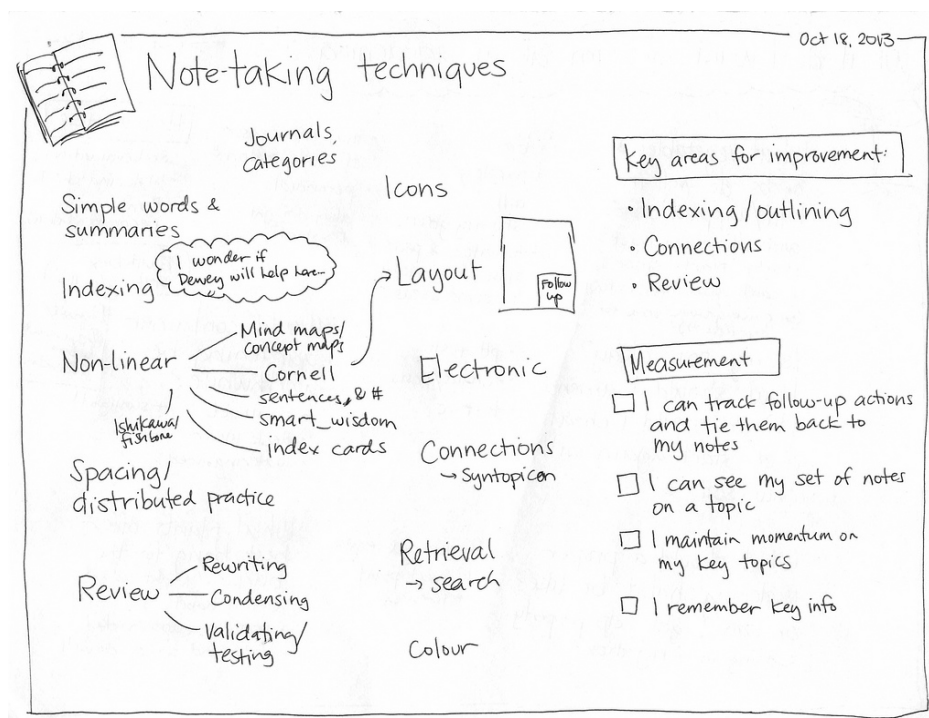


Figure 5. Sketchnote example (Chua, 2013). Copyright 2013 by S. Chua.

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