Active Reading Strategies & Effective Note Taking

Presented by Rose Lynch, M.A.
ISC Coordinator

Warren Community College

Active Reading Strategies

Reading for Writing

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Reading a textbook or an academic writing assignment is different from reading a novel.

- A novel is read for pleasure
- Assigned reading often leads to writing assignments which force thought & understanding
- Content usually more serious and/or scholarly
- Some material may be difficult to comprehend

Barriers to Effective Reading

Reasons for NOT Reading

1. My textbooks are boring or I don't like to read.
2. I can't concentrate.
3. I fall asleep when I read.
4. I read for hours, but don't understand what I have read.

Strategies for Overcoming Reasons

1. Create positive affirmation about reading- "I enjoy reading books and articles of all kinds."
2. Create a study location free from distractions.
3. Don't read at night in your comfy bed, but rather at a well lit desk or table; make time to read in the morning instead.
4. Divide your reading into smaller readable chunks & take breaks-increases comprehension & reduce reading time.

Active Reading Strategies

Implementing these strategies can help you prepare for writing about what you've read.

1) Pre-read
   - **Chapter summary**, abstract, class notes or even online reviews-provide insight to what's going to be covered.
     - **Chapter titles/objectives, focus questions,** text headings, charts, graphs, illustrations, previews & summaries-help create the big picture.
       - **Turn text headings into questions -** answer as you read.
2) Mark up the text
   - Read with pencil in hand, make notes
   - Highlight, underline, circle, or bracket passages
   - Use post-it notes

Active Reading Strategies (continued)

3) Take reading notes
   - More detailed notes are helpful – Include your thoughts, ideas & questions.
   - Read and mark main ideas & supporting details.
4) Five-minute reflective writing
   - Helps to summarize what you've read.
     - ***Free-write***: uninterrupted & unedited.
     - ***Quick Questions***: identify the most interesting, important, confusing, unexpected, etc. info; then generate some questions & look for the answers.
     - ***Summary***: 5-6 sentences about what you've just read.
     - ***Quotation bank***: transcribe most important passages; include page # for possible use in your paper.

Active Reading Strategies (continued)

5) Reread, reread, and reread again!

- No academic writing assignment will succeed upon a single reading.
- Your understanding will change & evolve with each subsequent reading.
  - You will notice things you did not before.

Just for fun... CAN YOU RAED TIHS?

I cdnuol't blveiee taht I cluod aulaclty uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter byistlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!!!!!!

Additional Reading Tips

- Ensure your study/reading area is conducive – Free from distractions.
  - Try listening to music at low volume to filter out other sounds.
- Monitor your comprehension – Look up unfamiliar words/concepts.
- Highlight, underline your text or take notes as you read each section.
- Concentrate on reading faster – Experiment found that students improved speed by 25-50% by deciding to read faster.
- Use Cengage's read aloud feature.
- Consider creating a vocabulary list in a journal.
- PS ~ Spelling *IS* important! ☺

Effective Note-Taking

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Why Do We Take Notes?

- Understand & Remember
- Outline important points
- Clarify new ideas

What to Do When Taking Notes

BEFORE CLASS

- **Complete all homework assignments**
- **Review notes** from previous class
- **Be Prepared** – Bring materials such as text/ notebook, pens, pencils highlighters, eraser, copy of assignments
- **Sit front and center** – eliminates distractions

DURING CLASS

- **Ask questions & participate** in discussions – clarify confusing material & encourage memory association.
- **Highlight/Underline important information**
- **Listen & look for verbal and nonverbal clues** – Repeated words or phrases, transition words/phrases like *the main point is, most importantly, to summarize*.
- ***Anticipate your professor's lecture style***

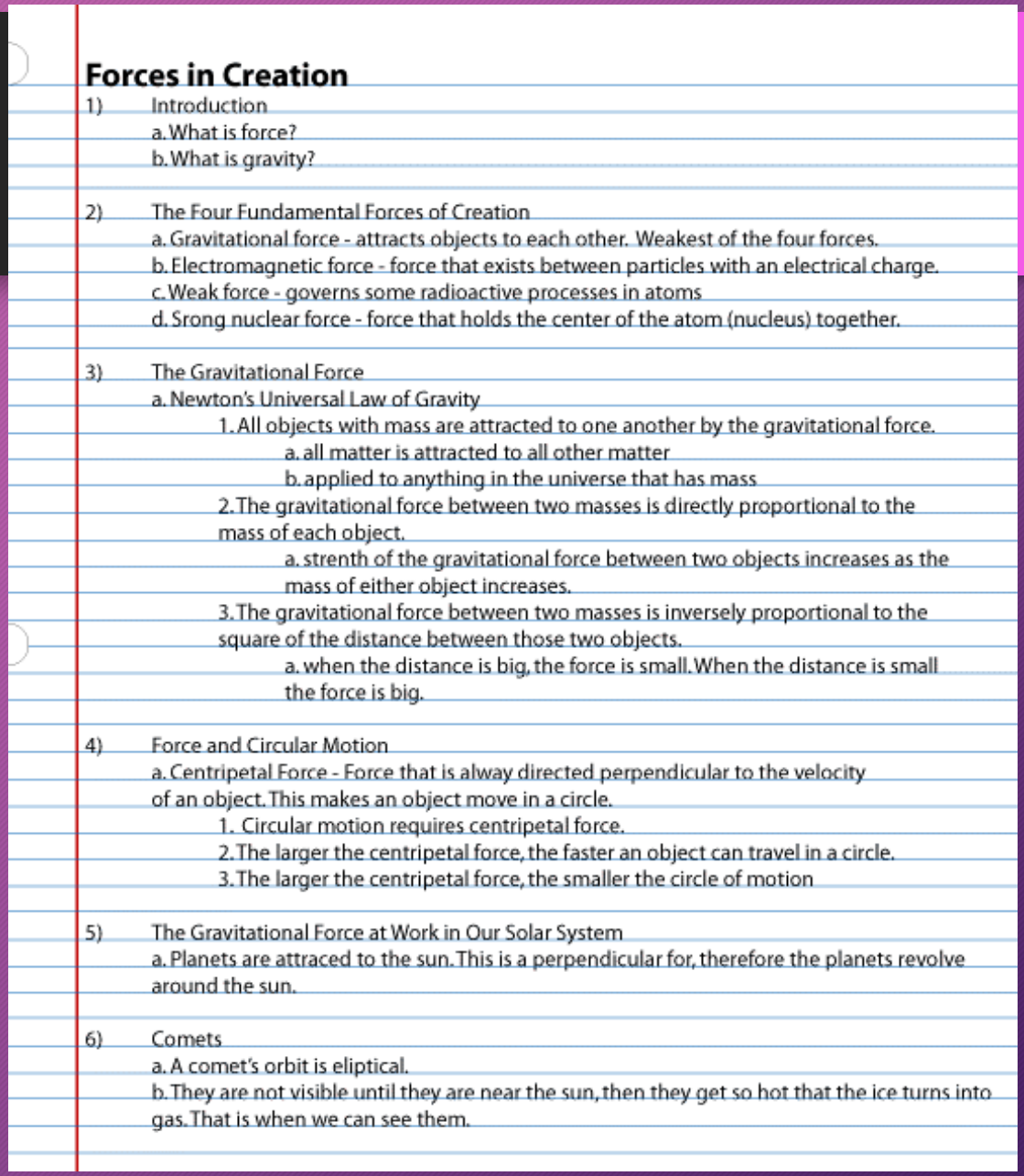
AFTER CLASS

- **Review your notes for 10 minutes** – This helps transfer information from short term memory to long term.
- **Make sure you understand your notes** – edit when necessary for messy handwriting & fill in missing info.
- **Type your notes within 24 hours**-will require you to review them & enable you to save them.

Outline Method Example:

Helpful Hints: ALWAYS…

- Use a separate notebook for each course.
- Include the date & topic on the 1st page for easier future access/reference.



Forces in Creation

1) Introduction
   a. What is force?
   b. What is gravity?

2) The Four Fundamental Forces of Creation
   a. Gravitational force - attracts objects to each other. Weakest of the four forces.
   b. Electromagnetic force - force that exists between particles with an electrical charge.
   c. Weak force - governs some radioactive processes in atoms
   d. Srong nuclear force - force that holds the center of the atom (nucleus) together.

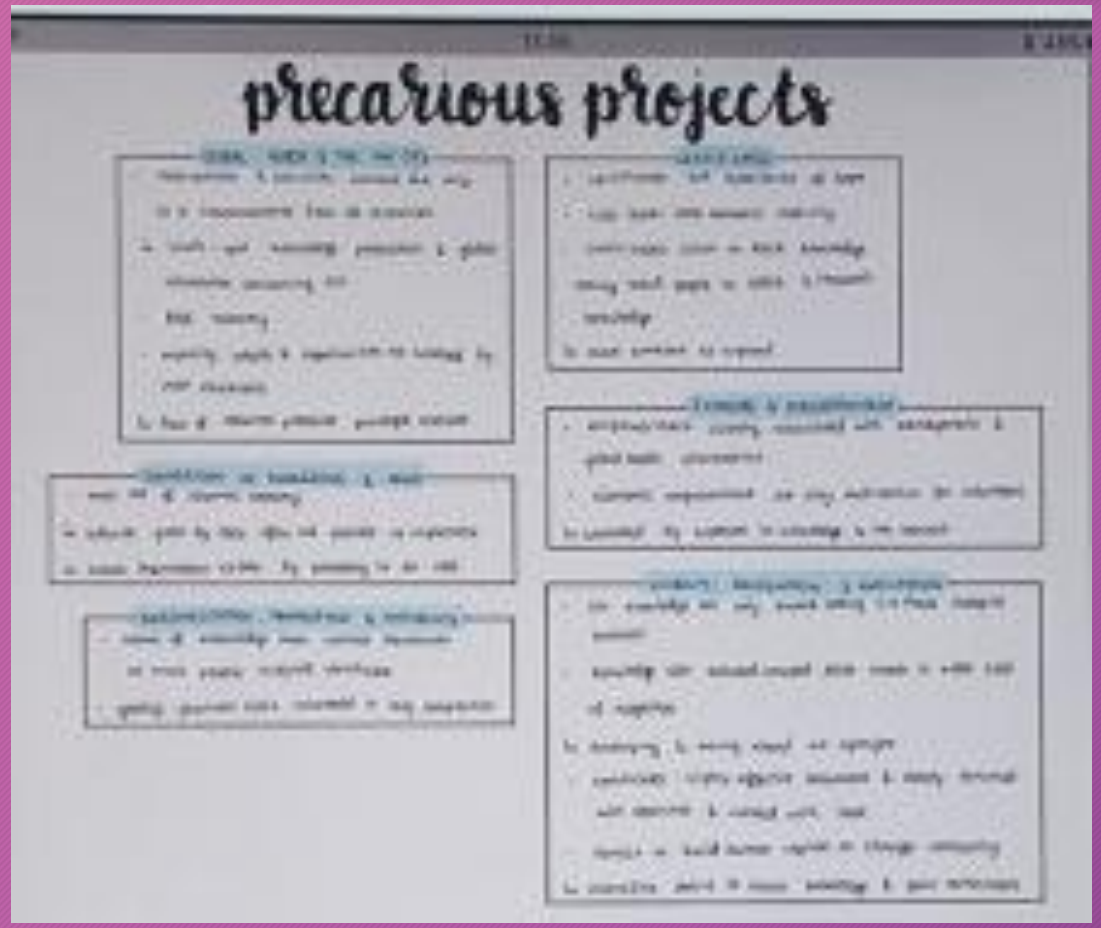
3) The Gravitational Force
   a. Newton's Universal Law of Gravity
      1. All objects with mass are attracted to one another by the gravitational force.
         a. all matter is attracted to all other matter
         b. applied to anything in the universe that has mass
      2. The gravitational force between two masses is directly proportional to the mass of each object.
         a. strenth of the gravitational force between two objects increases as the mass of either object increases.
      3. The gravitational force between two masses is inversely proportional to the square of the distance between those two objects.
         a. when the distance is big, the force is small. When the distance is small the force is big.

4) Force and Circular Motion
   a. Centripetal Force - Force that is alway directed perpendicular to the velocity of an object. This makes an object move in a circle.
      1. Circular motion requires centripetal force.
      2. The larger the centripetal force, the faster an object can travel in a circle.
      3. The larger the centripetal force, the smaller the circle of motion

5) The Gravitational Force at Work in Our Solar System
   a. Planets are attraced to the sun. This is a perpendicular for, therefore the planets revolve around the sun.

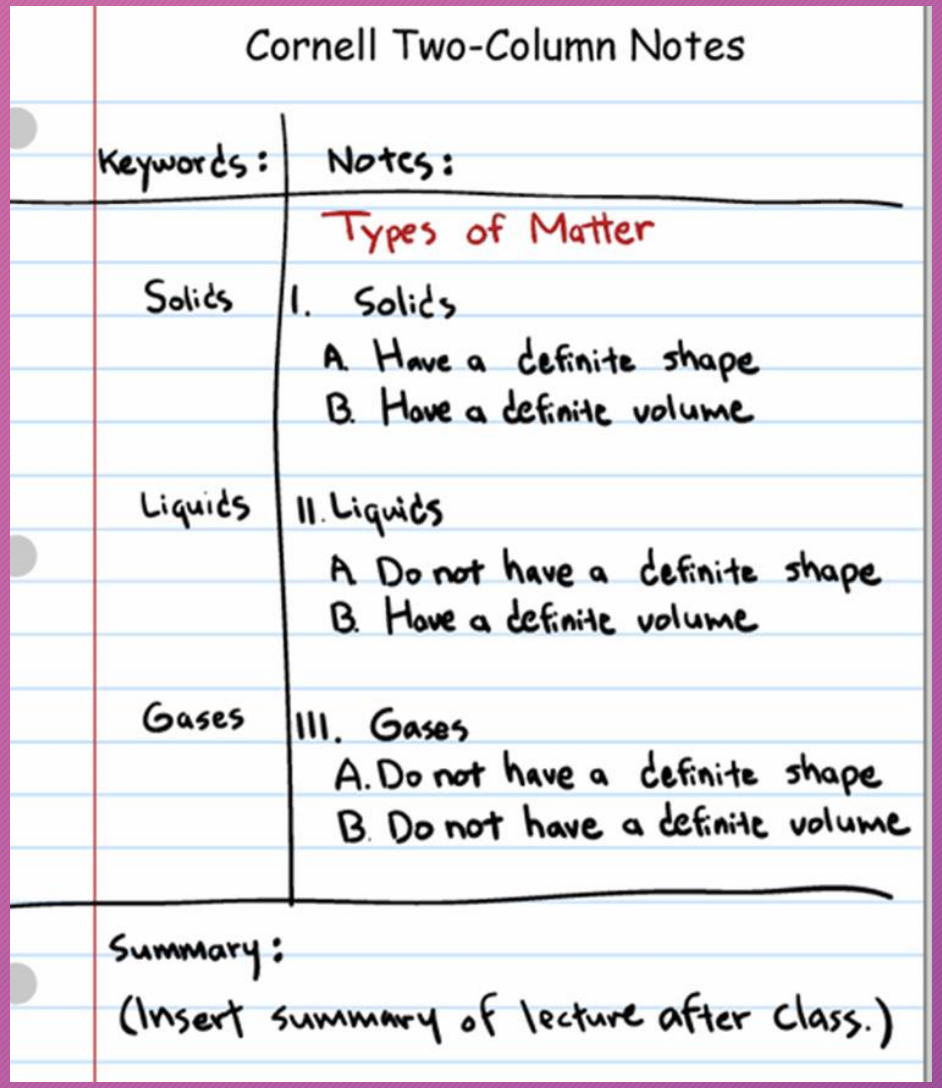
6) Comets
   a. A comet's orbit is eliptical.
   b. They are not visible until they are near the sun, then they get so hot that the ice turns into gas. That is when we can see them.

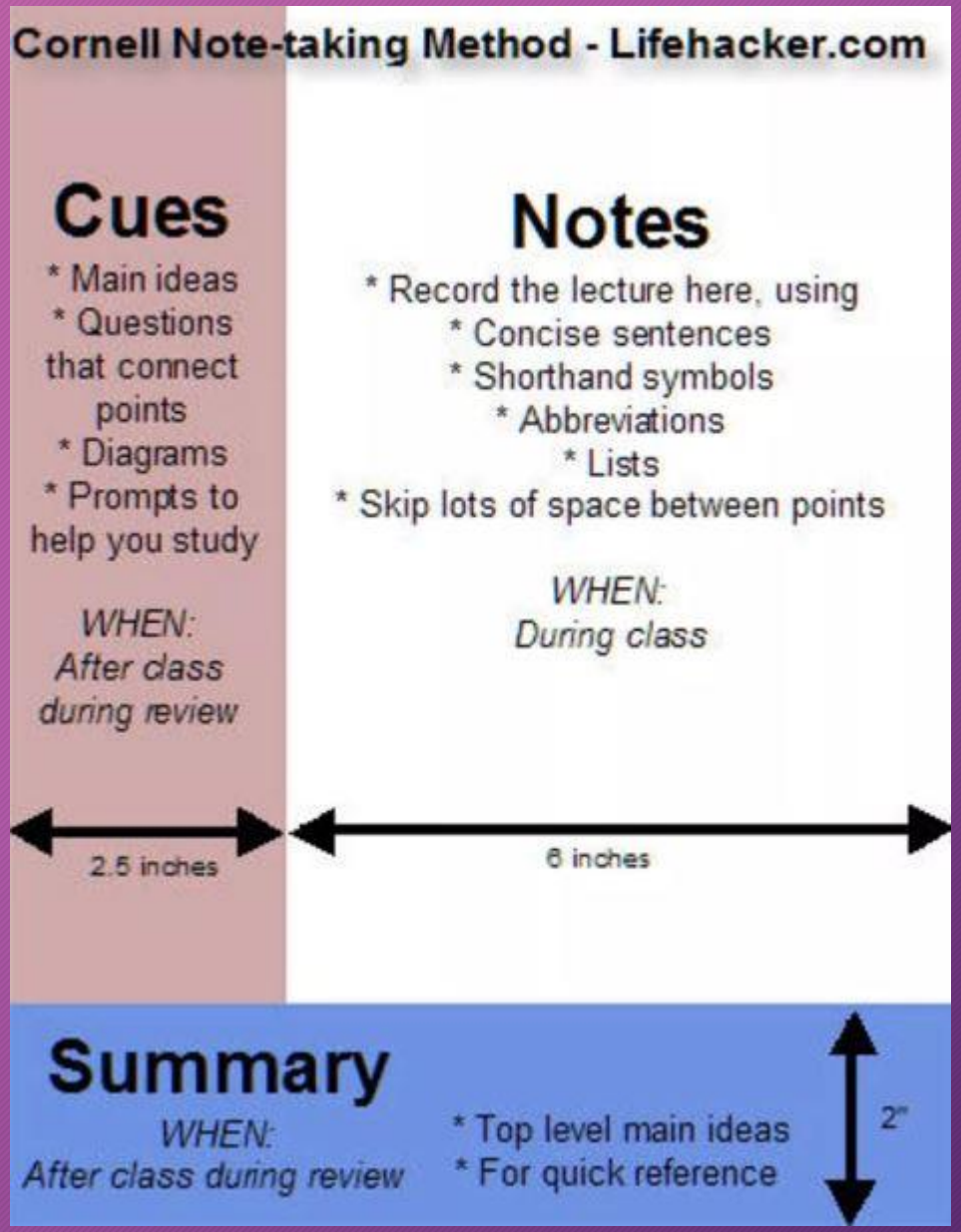
Boxing & Charting Method Examples



Method	Description	When to use	Pros	Cons
Outline				
Cornell				
Boxing				
Charting				

Cornell Method





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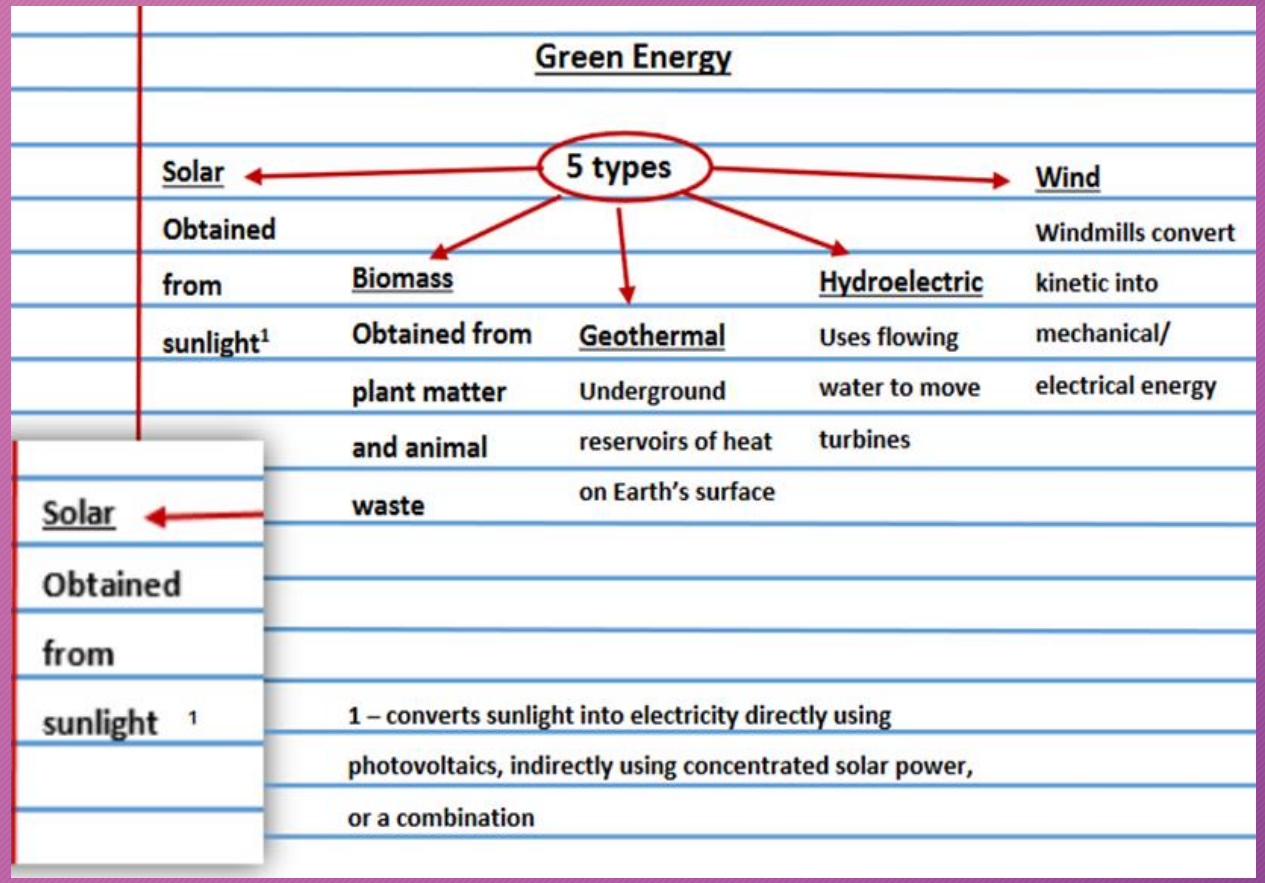
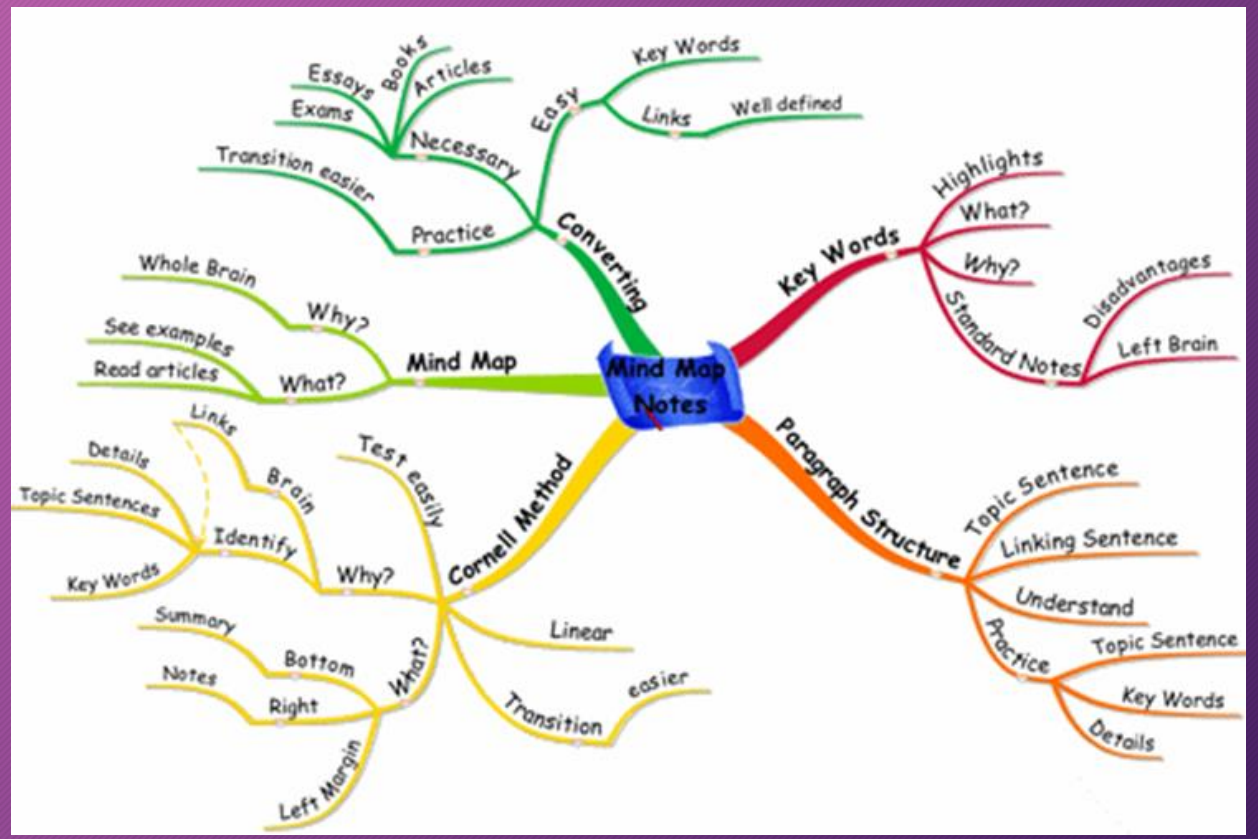
Examples of the Mapping Method





Are You a Good Note Taker?

Take the Quiz…			
Pre-Lecture	Read the assigned material?	Yes	No
	Reviewed notes from previous class?	Yes	No
	Completed any assignments?	Yes	No
During Lecture	Used appropriate heading?	Yes	No
	Highlighted/underlined important information?	Yes	No
	Asked questions?	Yes	No
Post Lecture	Reviewed for 10 minutes?	Yes	No
	Clarified difficult to read or confusing notes?	Yes	No

Analysis: The more ***YES*** answers you have, the better you are at taking notes. Consider the 3 time categories for note taking: are your answers clustered in one time? If so, consider changing you note taking & study habits to get the most information out of the class.

Resources

- Good Notes Blog
- RMIT University Training
- Vanderbilt University
- Skip Downing, On Course Textbooks