

How To: Use Note-Taking Strategies

DQ2: HELPING STUDENTS EFFECTIVELY INTERACT WITH NEW KNOWLEDGE

Element 12

Strategies for Helping Students Record and Represent Knowledge

Note-Taking Strategies

The interactive nature of note taking encourages students to actively process what they are hearing or seeing. After the students have had the chance to process new content, the teacher should then chunk the information allowing the student time to write down key terms or thoughts. There are many different methods for taking notes.

Teacher-prepared notes were previously outlined in Element 8, Previewing New Content. One method, **Combination Notes**, usually provides the key concepts on one side of the page and leaves room for a drawing or picture that the student provides to demonstrate the understanding of the concept. **Guided Notes** were also detailed in Element 8. This is a fill-in-the-blank approach where some of the information is provided by the teacher and the student is responsible for completing the thought process by filling in the answers from the lecture or demonstration presented by the teacher. These strategies work well for those students new to note-taking. The student observes what the teacher views as crucial information during the instruction of the content. Please refer to Element 8 for more information and examples on either of these two note-taking strategies.

At some point students need to learn to take their own notes. At first it can be difficult for them to differentiate between essential and extraneous information. But with practice this skill can be mastered. The teacher can also incorporate the use of cooperative groups and let the students compare notes with another group.

An **informal outline** is another strategy that can be utilized for note taking. Students use indentation to document the “big ideas” and supporting examples or facts. An example of an informal outline used for note taking on a lesson on the periodic table is provided in *A Handbook for the Art and Science of Teaching*. It is found in Figure 6.1, page 71:

Periodic Table of Elements

A group is a vertical column in the periodic table

- 18 groups
- Some groups contain elements with very similar properties
- Number of valence shell electrons determines group

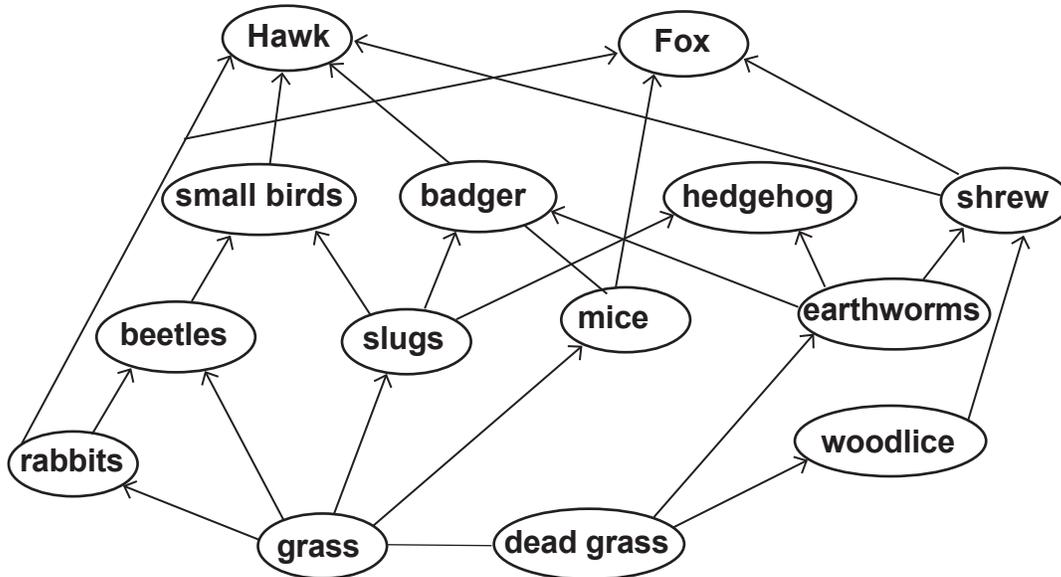
A period is a horizontal row in the periodic table

- 7 periods
- Some periods also show similar properties
- Total number of electron shells determines period

Elements are listed in order of increasing atomic number

- Number of protons in atomic number

A **Free-Flowing Web** can also be utilized for note taking. The example below demonstrates the relationships that exist in a simple food web.



Taken from <http://click4biology.info/c4b/5/eco5.1.htm>

Below is an example that combines an informal outline, a web and a combination note sheet.

INFORMAL OUTLINE	WEB	COMBINATION NOTES								
<p>The Circulatory System</p> <p><i>Transport systems</i></p> <p><u>Three Functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries food and oxygen • Carries waste from cells • Protects body from disease <p><u>Three Parts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart • Blood vessels • Blood <p><u>One of Four Parts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plasma • Red blood cells • White blood cells • Platelets 		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Notes</th> <th style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Graphic</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="height: 100px;"></td> <td style="height: 100px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Summary</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="height: 100px;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Notes	Graphic			Summary			
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Taken from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/106009/chapters/Summarizing-and-Note-Taking.aspx>