Taking Notes for your Research Paper

Get Organized
This is the first step to a great research paper. Keeping track of your sources and taking good notes will help you:

- **Save time** – you won’t have to search for lost sources and you will be able to retrieve them quickly when you need them.
- **Avoid plagiarism** – you will easily be able to trace where you got an idea, find quotes and page numbers, and cite correctly.
- **Organize your thoughts** – you can shuffle and reshuffle your notes and organize them into coherent sections for your paper.
- **Write your paper with ease** – once you have your thoughts and notes organized, you can just move from one section to the next with ease and all the facts will be at your fingertips.

Work with Note Cards
You've got to have a system! This tried and true method for note taking is easy, and can be done on note cards or digitally. Here’s how it works:

- **For each source** – First, record the bibliography citation on a document or in a citation tool (like EasyBib.)
- **As you read** – When you find something you think might be useful, write the main idea on a note card. (You can do this with direct quotes, as well.) At the top of the card write the question it addresses (or section of your paper where it will fit in) and add the in-text citation for the source at the bottom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/ Paper Section</th>
<th>Question/ Paper Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main idea – paraphrase</td>
<td>“Direct Quote”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter, page numbers</td>
<td>Page numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in-text citation)</td>
<td>(in-text citation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **As you work** – As you collect sources, make an outline, and begin to write, you can group the cards by Question/Section and arrange them in an order that makes your argument.

* * *

Make Your Life Easy – Get Organized and Take Notes
You’ll Be Glad You Did

10/2/15