

# **ORGANIZING TEXTBOOK NOTES - OUTLINE**

**Main idea:** Good note-taking is a practical active aid to tying down written information; also it makes you see “plan” and provides material for review and future use.

## **I. FIVE METHODS OF TAKING NOTES**

### **A. Writing in margins (“annotation”)**

1. Useful for some people
2. Control factors
  - a. Must own book permanently
  - b. Calls for small, legible handwriting
  - c. Margins must be fairly large
  - d. Amount of detail limited

### **B. Underlining in book or highlighting**

1. Very popular
2. Control factors
  - a. Must own book permanently
  - b. Use pencil or preferably ball point
  - c. Can also use broad felt tip
    - 1) Draw through words (not under)
    - 2) Use transparent ink; usually yellow
    - 3) Watch for “bleeding” through paper
  - d. Try several colors of ball points, each for a special idea; (green), secondary ideas (red), etc.

### **C. Using index cards**

1. Uses for 3” x 5” cards
  - a. For quotations used in research work
  - b. For bibliographies
  - c. For short summaries
2. Uses for larger cards (5” x 3”; 6” x 9”)
  - a. For more detailed notes
  - b. Always number cards

### **D. Writing summaries**

1. Short restatement of author’s main ideas
  - a. Include author’s purpose, point of view, order of ideas
  - b. Use your own words
2. Helpful summaries are found in most textbooks

3. General guides in writing good summaries
  - a. Look for important topic paragraph (in paragraph)
  - b. Compare author's summary with your own
  - c. Keep summary short, to the point
  - d. Find main ideas expressed in topic paragraph
  - e. Summarize writer's ideas only; keep your opinions

#### E. **Developing outlines**

1. Outline is not-taking workhorse
  - a. Maximum communications, with details
  - b. Understanding author's plan helps in getting his meaning
2. Three outlining methods are used
  - a. Sentence outline
  - b. Paragraph outline
  - c. Phrase outline
3. Phrase outline most practical in terms of
  - a. Communications
  - b. Time
  - c. Legibility
4. General rules in outlining
  - a. Use overview (survey) to find main idea, spell out in line or two
  - b. Subheads are major items (roman numerals i, ii, iii, etc.)
  - c. Secondary ideas to major items (use a, b, c, etc.,)
  - d. For greater details indent further (use 1, 2, 3, etc.; And so on)
  - e. Make outline logical, try to keep similar items "parallel"
  - f. Use abbreviations and short cuts (just be sure you remember them)

## II. **COMBINING SEVERAL METHODS OF NOTE-TAKING**

### A. **Use margins, underling, outlining at some time**

### B. **Advantages**

1. You do almost no writing
2. You should easily see plan of author

### C. **Disadvantages**

1. Topic sentences may not be at beginning of paragraph
2. Not effective or useful as regular outline (for studying or rewriting)
3. Best to use with secondary texts