



Note taking is an important skill that you will use throughout your life. You will find yourself in many situations where you need to record important information in an organized and easily accessible way. The three skills you need are:

- Understanding and selecting the important ideas you need to record
- Paraphrasing and summarizing ideas
- Organizing the ideas

### 1. Understanding & selecting the important ideas

- It helps to have some knowledge of your subject before you begin so that you know what you're looking for. An easy way to accomplish this is to go to a general encyclopedia. Like *World Book*, and read the article on your subject.
- Now that you have some knowledge of the subject, make a list of sub-topics that will guide your research.
- Now choose the sub-topic area that most interests you. You will always produce better work if the topic is meaningful to you.

### 2. Paraphrasing and Summarizing

- To paraphrase means to express someone else's ideas in your own words.
- To summarize means to choose only the most essential points.
- Ask yourself, "What details are the most relevant to my topic?"
- When paraphrasing you must do two things: provide a reference and ensure the words and phrases are entirely in your own words.
- Do not copy passages word-for-word. Write the author's basic point only. Do not bother to use full sentences.
- Do note the page number of the original passage.

### 3. Organize the ideas

- Record bibliographic details before you begin taking notes.
- There are many strategies you can use to take notes, but the most important feature is to keep focused on one area at a time as you build your research accordingly.
- Group and connect ideas so that when you get to the organization and writing stages, your information will be easy to write into a well organized essay.