

See the *AVID Writing for Disciplinary Literacy* webpage on MyAVID for examples of note-taking format templates.

Selecting the Appropriate Format for Note-Taking

The chart below examines the key features of several popular note-taking formats. Educators and note-takers should consider the purpose for note-taking to determine which format will be most conducive to their objective.

Type of Notes	Description	Uses and Caveats
Cornell Notes	Includes a space at the top to write the Essential Question, a large column on the right for the notes themselves, a slimmer column to the left of the notes space for questions, and a place for a summary at the end.	The format facilitates the phases of the focused note-taking process by designating space for note-taking, connecting, and summarizing. The notes column may be lined or unlined and can be used with many note-taking styles.
Two- and Three-Column Notes	A structured form of note-taking in which content is organized into two or three columns based on note-taking objectives and the purpose of the lesson.	This style of notes is useful when information is highly structured or the note-taker's response to the information follows a repetitive pattern. It can also be useful if the instructor wants to build in space for student input or processing in multiple modes. The headings or purposes for the columns can be adapted to many situations and note-taking styles, both linguistic and visual, and are usually determined by the instructor.
Sketchnotes/ Mind Maps/ One-Pagers	Graphic forms of notes in which information is represented with a combination of pictures, shapes, symbols, and text.	The visual nature of these styles of notes engages learners who thrive on creativity, allows note-takers to make connections among ideas, and appeals to students who like to doodle and draw.
Graphic Organizers	Diagrams, webs, flowcharts, concept maps, and other visual organizers that use shapes, arrows, and lines to show connections between ideas. The instructor or note-taker will predetermine the best organizational format to use to meet the note-taking objective.	Graphic organizers help learners see patterns, connect ideas, and produce nonlinguistic representations of learning in their minds (Marzano et al., 2008). Graphic organizers may be used as the sole note-taking structure for an entire lesson or interspersed into traditional notes as needed to clarify a relationship.

For more information on Interactive Notebooks, see Chapter 2: Learning Through Writing (pages 22–37) or visit the Core Strategies: Interactive Notebooks page on MyAVID.

Type of Notes	Description	Uses and Caveats
Charts and Tables	A multi-column grid formation with headings at the top. Students fill out the chart or table during the lecture, video, or reading, extracting only the specified information.	When a lecture or text follows a repetitive structure or when students are expected only to extract certain elements from a source for research or other purposes, charts and tables effectively focus students' note-taking. These can be frustrating for students if the content deviates from the pattern.
Interactive Notebooks	A living archive of student learning, set up on facing pages in a notebook. Typically, right-side pages are used for teacher input (notes, texts, handouts, etc.) while the left-side pages are designated for student processing and reflection on the content on the facing page.	Notes are one component that appears frequently in Interactive Notebooks. The format itself encourages reflection and student input on the notes. Interactive Notebooks are usually teacher-assigned for a particular course, so this format would be less useful for research.
Combination Notes (Marzano et al., 2008)	A flexible style of note-taking that includes an informal outline (a linear style in which indentation indicates the relative importance of ideas) and web formats for note-taking. Note-takers divide the page into two columns. The left is for traditional, linear notes; the right is for notes taken using webbing or some other visual means. The note-taker leaves room at the bottom of the notes for a summary.	Not unlike Cornell notes, this style requires students to revisit and reconsider the information in multiple forms and to think about the content of the notes several times. This style of note-taking takes more time than other approaches because students interact with the information more than once, but the repetition incorporates much of the thinking expected in the focused note-taking process.