Taking Notes For Research Papers

Method: 4” x 6” Note Cards

The most frequently used method for taking notes on information located through research is note cards since a variety of materials from different sources are involved. Your own ideas, which will be included in the paper, should be based 4” x 6” on evidence and information found in the research process. The most frequently recommended size is 4” x 6”.

The advantages of note cards, as opposed to notebook paper, are:

- One idea per card: It is possible to put each idea or quotation on a separate card.
- Easy to rearrange cards: It is possible to develop the outline—and the paper—by arranging, and rearranging, the cards which is quicker and easier than recopying pages of written material.
- Records sources: It is easier to keep track of the sources of information found.

Kind of Notes: There are generally four kinds of notes used.

- Summary - a condensation of significant facts. A summary should contain:
  --the essential meaning of the original.
  --the order of the original.
  --the tense, mood and tone of the original.
  --the language of the original.
- Paraphrase- restates in one's own words. A paraphrase is:
  --approximately as long as the original.
  --may clarify or explain some parts of the original material.
  --may be written in a different order.
  --may be written in a different tense, mood or tone, using the syntax and vocabulary of the paraphraser.

The purposes of using paraphrases are:
--to show that the writer has mastered and assimilated the material well enough to be able to state it in his own words.
--to give the paper an even, consistent writing style

- Quotation- exact reproduction of source's words, whether oral or written, preserving all details of grammar, spelling, etc. Quotations are recommended:
--when an authority is to be cited exactly
--the original material is so well expressed that summary or paraphrase
would lose the essence.

Quotation marks **must** be used when quoting an author, even on the note card. Quotations may be combined with paraphrases.

- Personal comments- to record ideas or conclusions that may occur to writer
during the research process.

**Format of Note Cards**

Most frequently recommended: Identify the source of the information in the
upper left hand, using only author's last name and key words from title and page
number.

Example: Winkler, Writing Paper p. 34.

In upper right hand corner, identify general heading for the information contained-
for use of organizing cards and information. (Possibly write in pencil so can be
easily changed as section of paper develop).

Example: Note cards – format

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Winkler, Anthony C. and JoRay McCuen, *Writing the Research Paper: A