



NOTE-TAKING SKILLS

Academic Services Center

North Dakota State College of Science

STEPS TO GOOD LECTURE NOTE-TAKING

- Lectures aren't like watching TV where you can passively listen and think that you can absorb the information.
- You have to be mentally engaged so think about what the instructor is saying, what the application to real life is and ask questions if you do not understand!



BEFORE YOU TAKE NOTES



- Read information on syllabus and on-line learning site. Have assigned reading/learning components completed in advance.
- Download instructor's Powerpoint presentation to take notes on.
- Have the right materials available.
- Make a point to show up for every scheduled class and get comfortable before lecture begins.
- Sit front and center.
- Make note of distractions and adjust to environment (temperature, noise, lights).





WHILE YOU ARE TAKING NOTES

- Listen more than you write. Consider using a smart pen/tape recorder (with instructor's permission).
- Be selective about what you write and leave open space to add information later.
- Listen for introductions, conclusions and transitions that will help organize the notes.
- List questions about lecture and note agreements or disagreements with instructor's statements.
- Highlight obvious clues that certain info will be on an exam.
- Use abbreviations/symbols if instructor is talking fast. Be consistent in using abbreviations.
- Star/highlight important points.

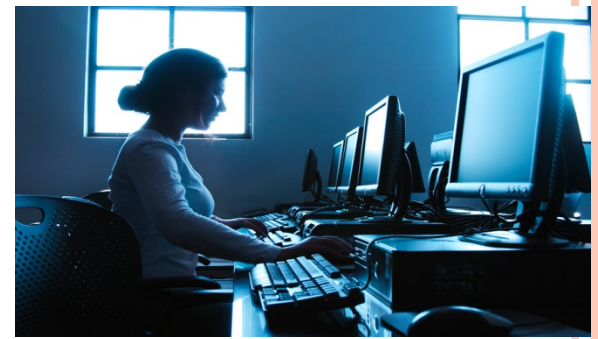


PAY ATTENTION TO THE INSTRUCTOR

- Pay attention to the instructor's body language and facial expressions for clues to what information is important. Repetition of information indicates that it is important.
- Let go of judgments about the instructor (appearance, mannerisms, language, etc.)
- If the instructor is disorganized, try to organize the material yourself by following an outline or rewriting your notes.
- Do not be afraid to ask the instructor questions or ask them to slow down or repeat information.



AFTER TAKING LECTURE NOTES



- Fix illegible words or rewrite notes if they seem disorganized, messy or difficult to understand.
- Fill in details that were missed by checking with instructor or classmates or reviewing other instruction materials.
- Ask instructor any questions from previous day's notes.
- Make sure notes are numbered and organized with any related handouts (loose leaf paper in a binder allows materials to be combined and allows for easier review and making additions).
- Re-read notes the same day they are taken, and review all notes once a week.



OUTLINE FORMAT



- *Illustrates major points and supporting ideas in an organized way.
- * Leave spaces to go back and add information later.
- * Use key word to trigger memory and make connections.

Example: Outline Format (topic)

I. Purpose

- To separate the most important points from the bulk of the chapter.
- To act as an aid in understanding the chapter.
- To assist in learning because it requires thought and effort.
- To aid in reviewing for quizzes and tests.
- To develop logical thinking.



CORNELL FORMAT



- A type of outlining in which the left 1/3 of paper is left blank to insert key words and sample questions after note-taking session has ended.
- The left side can also can reference hand-outs, readings, personal comments.
- Allows for more successful review of information because the student can predict what type of test questions will be asked based on the notes taken.



FLASH CARDS

* HELPFUL FOR REMEMBERING LARGE AMOUNTS OF FACTUAL INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY:

VOCABULARY WORDS, FORMULAS, SAMPLE PROBLEMS, DEFINITIONS, DATES, NAMES, KEY WORDS

EXAMPLE:

3 levels of government

1. Local
2. State
3. Federal



MAKING FLASHCARDS



- Find an online site that assists you in making flashcard, like flashcardmachine.com
- Break cards into small groups and study one group at a time
- Review all cards from time to time
- Shuffle cards so you don't learn them in a certain order
- Alternate viewing both sides of the cards

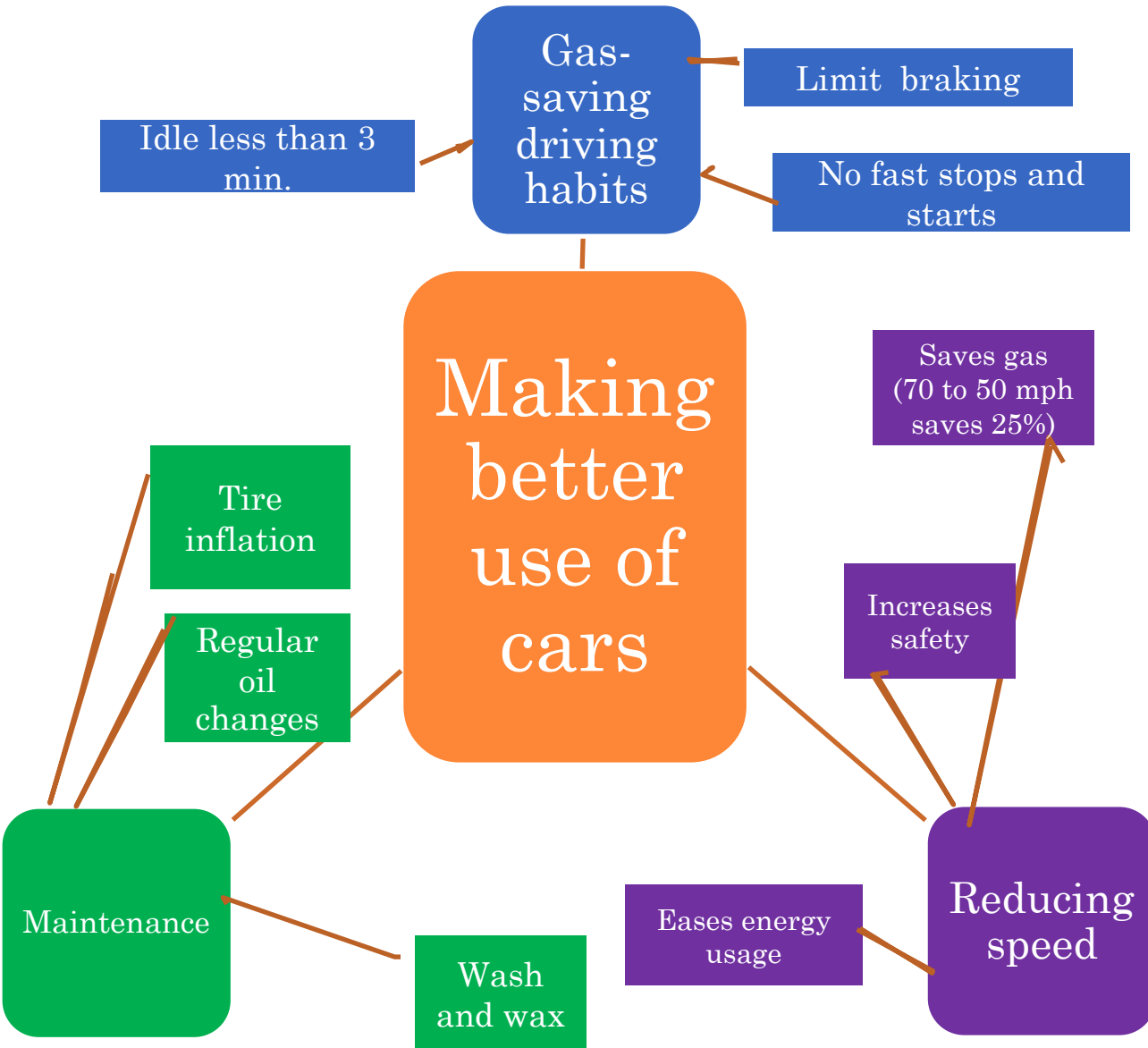


MAPPING: VISUAL OUTLINING



- Process of making a picture/diagram of what is read or said, using different colors to organize.
- The whole picture of a lecture or essay is on one page. It forces you to reduce information to bare bones.
- Everyone's map is different; you can create your own style.
- The map will help you learn connections between ideas.
- The map will refresh your memory very quickly.





MAPPING EXAMPLE

- Main heading covers over-all topic
- Sub-headings include supporting ideas
- Off-shoots contain info such as what, why, who, how, facts, quotes, examples and other details
- Use key words to relate concepts
- Use abbreviations
- Use color to organize
- Review map to avoid repetitions and look for missing concepts

