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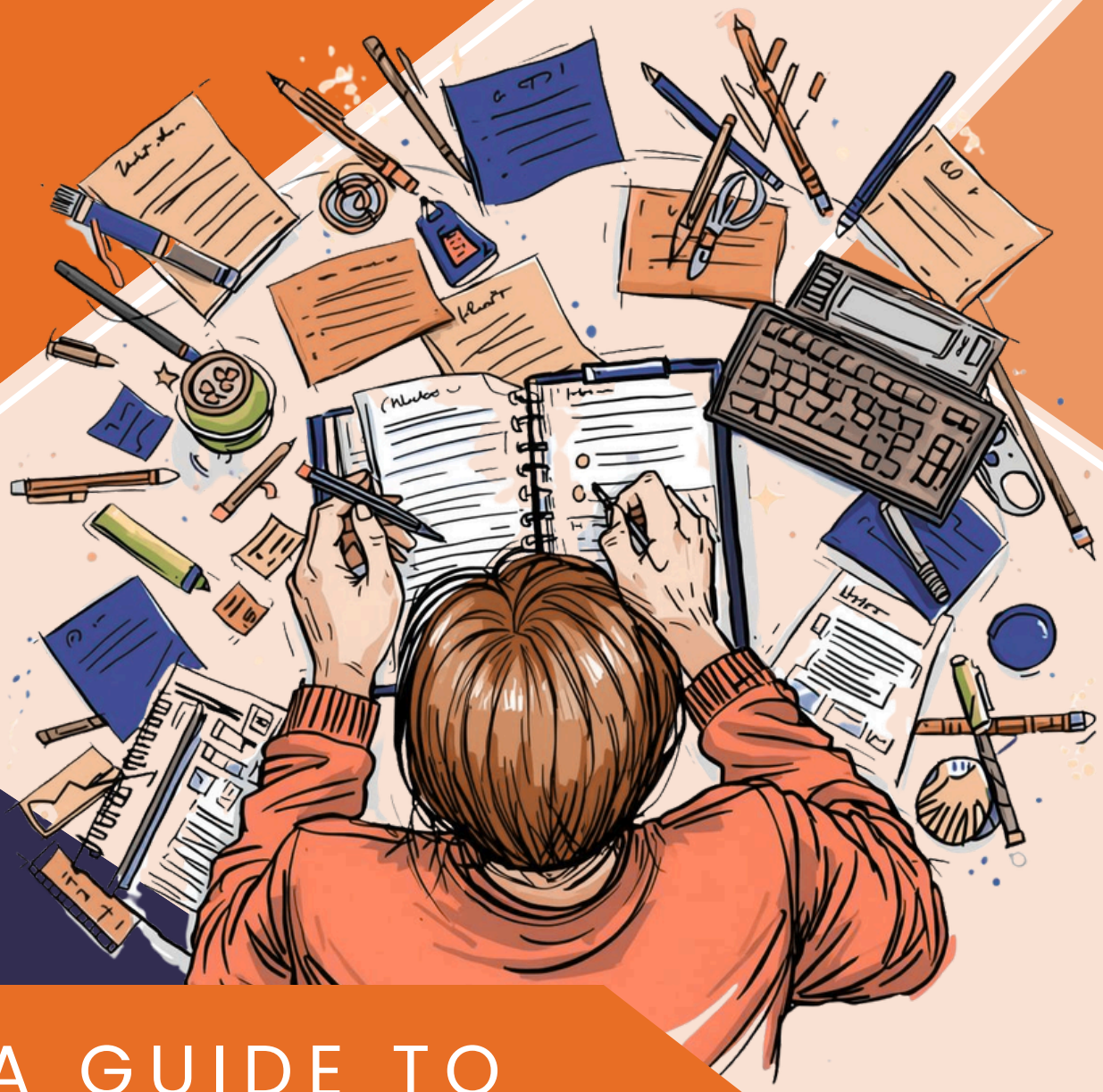


A GUIDE TO **NOTE TAKING**

Developed by CUC Snowy Monaro November 2025

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This guide is designed to assist students with note-taking skills and provide them with necessary resources.

OUTLINE METHOD

This method gives structure to your information by identifying the main topic, subtopics and supporting information.

When to use: Lectures & Meetings

Pros:
- Quick visualisation of information hierarchy
- Grouping of information
- Revision friendly

Cons:
- Cannot effectively integrate images (charts, diagrams, etc)
- Difficult to use in classes that are fast-paced or where lectures are unstructured
- Allows for thoughtless recording

Title

Main topic #1
Subtopic
- specific thought/fact #1
  - example
- specific thought/fact #2
  - example
- specific thought/fact #3
  - example

Main topic #2
Subtopic
- specific thought/fact #1
  - example
- specific thought/fact #2
  - example
- specific thought/fact #3
  - example

Resources:
- Resource 1
- Resource 2
- YouTube Guide
- Outline Method in Assignment Planning

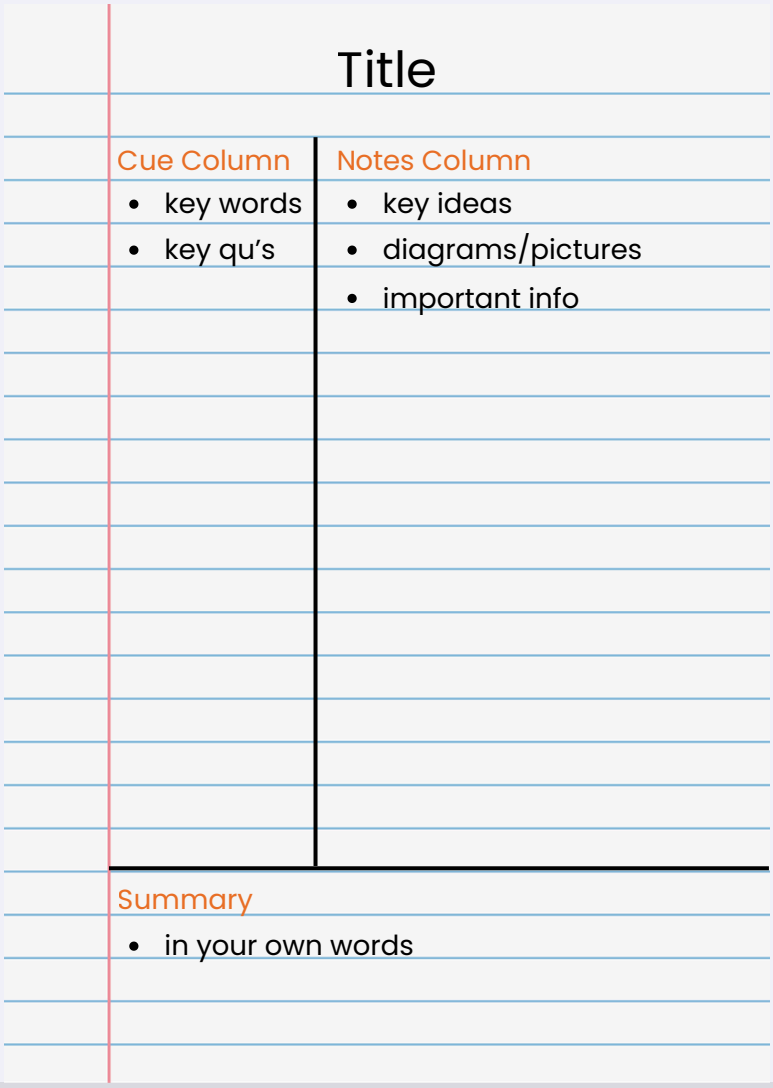
CORNELL METHOD

By having a separate column for keywords and questions, you can easily identify the most important parts of the content. Creating a summary at the end in your own words can assist you in better understanding the topic.

When to use: Study & revision sessions + lectures if you want to use active note-taking

Pros:
- Easy identification of main ideas and keywords
- Summary section to proactively engage in the integration of acquired knowledge
- Logically organised note to revise

Cons:
- Time-consuming and more effort required
- Requires note set-up or pre-printed notebooks specifically for the Cornell system
- Note taking column has limited space



Resources:
Resource 1
Resource 2

CHARTING METHOD

Organising your notes using the charting method allows you to organise ideas/topics into categories and visualise the relationships. Think of it as a note spreadsheet where each column has a unique category, and each row has its own topic.

When to use: Study & revision sessions

Pros:
- Able to visualise key info quickly
- Reduces amount of writing and forms tidier notes
- Offers a way to memorise and see relationships within topics
- Useful for study sessions

Cons:
- Not suitable for STEM-related subjects
- Not always ideal to use in a lecture
- Relies on your ability to correctly identify categories and topics

Resources:
- Resource 1
- Resource 2

MAPPING METHOD

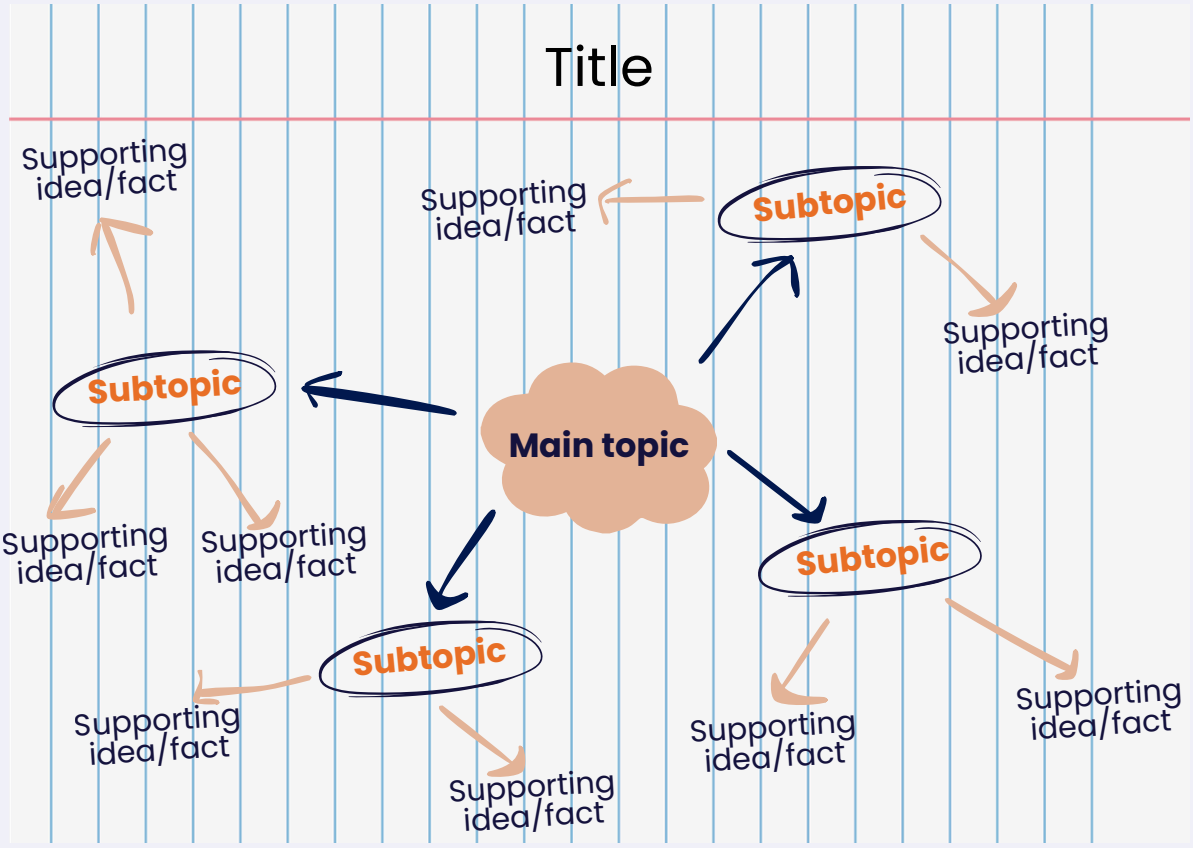
The mapping method is great for visualising your ideas/thoughts and seeing the connections between large amounts of information. It is also a great tool in planning assignments/brainstorming, and determining your gaps in knowledge.

When to use: Study & revision sessions + lectures if you want to use active note-taking

Pros:
- Ideal for visual learners
- No rigid structure
- See relationships between topics

Cons:
- Often works best alongside other note-taking methods
- Not ideal for complex topics
- Can get messy, and difficult to determine between facts and your thoughts

Resources:
- Resource 1
- Resource 2
- mindmaps



TAKING NOTES FROM TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER READINGS

Make the most out of reading through textbooks and other course readings by taking effective notes and implementing active learning strategies.

Active Reading

- Highlighting key/important information - moderation is key
- Annotate texts with comments and questions
- Read out loud (to yourself or someone else)
- Explain what you have read to someone else - this will show how well you understood the text, and what you may need to focus more on
- Test yourself - write down the key points from the chapter without checking the text

Survey, Question, Read, Respond, Record, Review (SQ4R)

Survey	• skim • read through chapter summary
Question	• turn each heading into a question
Read	• active reading
Respond	• summarise in your own words - this means only the key points • recite out loud • answer the questions
Record	• highlight passages • write notes in your own words • **understand before you record*
Review	• quiz yourself • regularly go over notes

NEED HELP?
REACH OUT

Find contact details for our Education Coordinators or Centre Manager on our website - Our People page

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