

Where Bacteria Live on Our Tongues

Activity Guide for Students: Taking Notes and Creating Visual Summaries

Part 1: Taking and organizing notes

Taking notes is a very important skill, helping you to identify key concepts or important details. Sometimes by the time you finish learning about the subject, you may have forgotten the material that came before.

In this activity, you will be taking notes on an article about a scientific discovery. Each member of your group will take notes using a different method, so that you can compare the methods and find one that works best for you. This activity is going to take place in a virtual environment. You should follow your teacher's instructions on how to set everything up and how you should go about sharing your findings remotely.

Your teacher will assign you to a group to discuss the following questions.

1. Why is it important to take notes?
2. When might you take notes?
3. What are some goals of note-taking?
4. How might your note-taking differ depending on the goals?
5. How do you typically take notes?

Taking your notes

There are many different methods for taking notes. Review some various approaches at this link: <https://miamioh.instructure.com/courses/62085/pages/note-taking-styles>. Also think about different ways to organize your notes, such as using highlighters of different colors to identify related concepts, placing color-coded sticky note flags on related ideas or drawing different shapes around similar ideas.

Once you have reviewed note-taking methods, each member of your group should select a different method to apply. You will take notes using this method as you read a [Science News](#) article assigned by

your teacher. After reading the article and taking and organizing your notes, answer the following questions.

6. What article did your group read?

7. What method of taking notes did you use? What does this method entail?

8. What did you like about this method of taking notes?

9. What didn't you like about this method of taking notes?

10. What method of organizing your notes did you use? Why?

11. Based on your notes, what was the main idea or theme of the article you read?

12. Into which categories could your notes be classified, based on the article?

Comparing methods

Using the chat platform selected by your teacher (such as Zoom or Skype), give a presentation about your note-taking method to the group, explaining what you did and didn't like about the method you used. Be sure to also discuss how you organized your notes. The group should then discuss which methods best capture the following information: What are the main ideas of the article? What is the main theme? Who are the important players? What are the discoveries discussed in the article? What conclusions did the scientists reach from their research and what impacts will they have?

After watching each other's presentations and reviewing the notes created using each of the methods, answer the questions to identify which method of note-taking you think would work best for you. Be sure to discuss your reasoning with your group.

13. Which methods of note-taking made the information easiest to understand? Why?

14. Which methods of note-taking did you find made it easiest to find information? Why?

15. Which methods of note-taking did you think had the most complete information? Why?

16. Which methods of note-taking did you find to be the most complicated? Why?

17. Which method of organizing the notes did you like best? Why?

18. Based on your answers above, which method of taking and organizing the notes would you use in the future? Why?

19. Is there anything else you would change about this method of note-taking or organizing to make it easier for you to use?

Part 2: Creating a visual summary

Now you will create a visual summary of the article you read. You may find it useful to review how to write a summary by checking out *Science News*' ["2019 Year in Review" discussion](#) on how to write summaries. Because the *Science News* article reports on the findings of a primary research paper, be sure to include information about the experiment that was conducted.

Answer questions No. 20 and 21 to plan your visual summary. After creating your summary, answer questions No. 22 through 24. Then share your summary and get feedback.

20. Why might it be helpful to create a visual summary?

21. What information is essential to relay in your visual summary?

22. After creating your visual summary, is there information from the article that you left out? If so, why?

23. Would someone seeing your visual summary have a complete understanding of what was discussed in the article?

24. Would someone seeing your visual summary have a complete understanding of the experiment reported in the primary research paper? Explain.

Extension

Look at the [graphical abstract](#) from the [primary research paper](#) and answer the following questions, comparing and contrasting it with your visual summary of the *Science News* article.

1. What information about the experiment does the graphical abstract include that your visual summary doesn't include?

2. Why does the information included in the visual summaries differ? What does this tell you about the intended audiences for the two texts and visuals?

3. What do you think is the goal of the graphical abstract in the primary research paper? How does this goal influence what information is included?