Note Taking: Outlining Method

The outlining method is perhaps the most common form of note taking used by college students; an outline naturally organizes the information in a highly structured, logical manner, forming a skeleton of the textbook chapter or lecture subject that serves as an excellent study guide when preparing for tests. This method of note taking is ideal for humanities and language based courses as oppose to Math or Science courses which utilize numbers, graphs, formulas, and charts.

How to Use

- Write points in an organized manner based on space indentation.
- Place major points farthest to the left.
- Indent each more specific point farther to the right (level of importance is indicated by distance away from left margin).

Advantages

The outlining method emphasizes content as well as relationships between the material. Also, it reduces the time needed for editing and allows for easy reviewing.

Disadvantages

This method requires more thought for accurate, understandable organization and, therefore, cannot be used during lectures that move too quickly.

How to study from an outline

I. Read through one line at a time
   A. Explain the information and connect the idea to others presented
II. Check the accuracy of the information
III. Add clue words
   A. Jot down keywords or details that you didn’t originally include in the outline
   B. Use these keywords to jog your memory when studying from the outline
IV. Recite information from the outline aloud
V. Write a summary of the information presented
   A. Use your own words to connect the various ideas presented in the outline in a logical manner.