



## Gathering Your Evidence: Effective Note Taking

**Research:** When conducting research, you look for information that will answer your leading question and support your thesis statement. This information becomes an important component of your essay because you must use it as evidence to support your assertions or topic sentences. Without supporting evidence, your reader will not believe your ideas.

**Effective Note Taking:** It is vital to take effective notes. They give you a complete record of the information you found and can begin the process of original interpretation. Here is a two-part strategy for effective notetaking:

(Separate your page into two areas for recording information or use both sides of a notecard.)

### Part One: Evidence

In the first space:

#### Record the Evidence

You must make an effort to record the evidence accurately and include complete bibliographic information. Otherwise, you're in danger of misrepresenting the original author and committing plagiarism. Make sure to record the following:

- 1) The book's title, author, and publication information. (You must record the book's complete bibliographic information at least once.)
- 2) One piece of information you find pertinent to your thesis. (Make sure to put all of the author's original words in quotes.)
- 3) The specific page number for the information you recorded.

### Part Two: Interpretation

In the second space:

#### Record Your Interpretation of the Evidence

All information is open to interpretation. Immediately recording your perspective on the evidence will make you much more prepared to write your essay. Record your interpretation of the evidence by writing down your answer to one or more of the following questions:

- 1) What is this information's connection to my thesis or leading question?
- 2) Does this idea support or contradict my thesis?
- 3) How does this information support or contradict other evidence I have gathered?
- 4) How might the author's bias be slanting this information?
- 5) Does this evidence give me new ideas about my subject?
- 6) What is the greater significance of this piece of evidence?

**Note:** When using this method of taking notes, you will produce one piece of evidence per page or notecard. This allows the separate pages/cards of evidence to be organized or rearranged in order to help during the outlining process.