Preparing summary sheets for studying

Why use summaries?

- deepen your understanding of the material
- determine the key ideas (refer to the course outline for learning objectives)
- organize material into themes, or hierarchies
- look for connections among ideas, concepts, or problem sets
- use your 'visual brain'
- reduce the volume of content for faster reviews

Summary formats

Choose a summary method that reflects the content plus your preferred way of learning. These methods highlight studying the overall concepts.

Here are some useful formats:

1. Cornell   2. Mind-maps   3. Charts/Tables   4. Concept Summary
5. Timelines   6. Diagrams

1. The Cornell method

When to use: To combine lecture notes or power points with text or course manuals

How to use:

1. Start with the topic or title at the top of the page.
2. Draw a 2-3 column down the left side. Have your lecture and text open together. Write point from the lecture in the larger space, and add structure from the text in the smaller column.
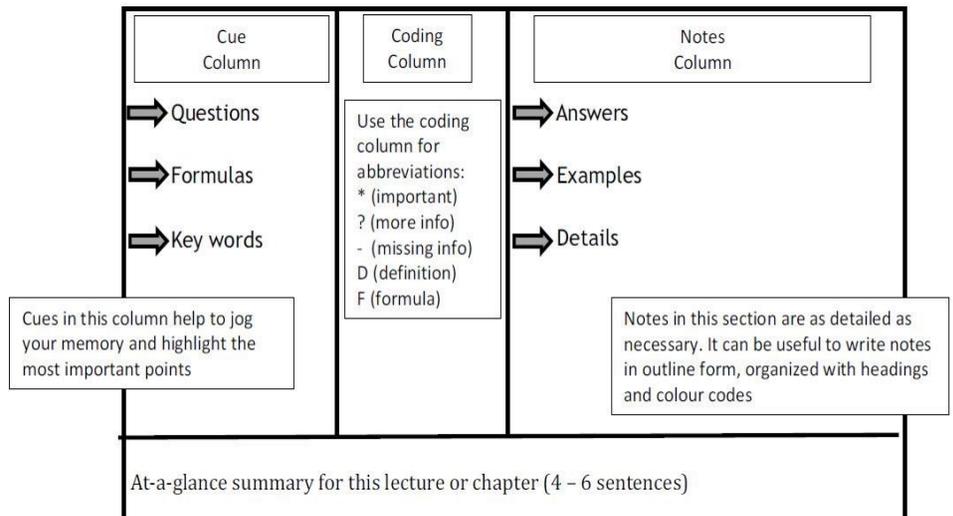
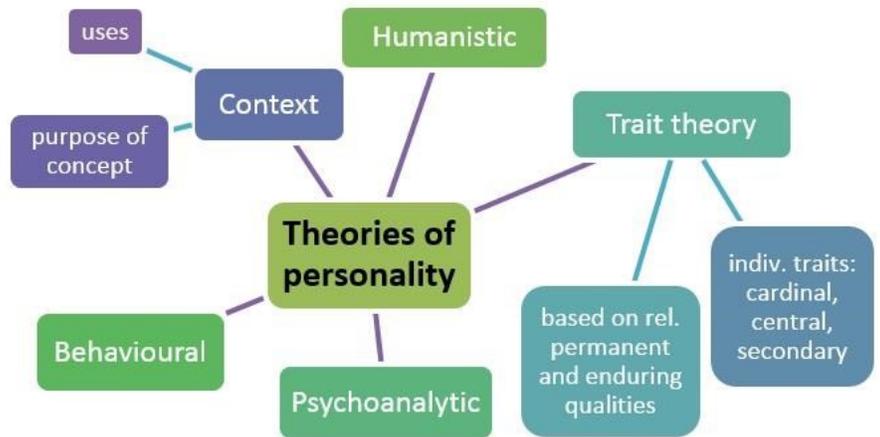For example, add subtitles, key terms, definitions or formula, pose questions.
3. Finish with a 4-6 sentence summary of the unit, topic or lecture.
4. Review by covering the larger column and asking questions based on the cues on the smaller column, or rehearsing final short summary.

2. Mind mapping

When to use: To see associations among relational material. This method is particularly helpful to visual learners, so use color as an additional aid.

How to use:

1. Identify the main topic or concept in the web's center. Structure sub-topics in the next layer.
2. Add information such as point, interpretation, explanation/evidence/example (PIE) for each detail.

uses

Humanistic

Context

purpose of concept

Trait theory

Theories of personality

indiv. traits: cardinal, central, secondary

based on rel. permanent and enduring qualities

Behavioural

Psychoanalytic

3. Chart

When to use: To facilitate comparative thinking.

How to use:

Identify the topics covered along the top of the chart, and the pattern of sub-topics along the side. This is the more conceptual thinking, and filling in the details of each cell is a more factual focus.

EXAMPLE (from Psychology class)

Type of memory	Information stored	Capacity	Duration of info.	Format
sensory	temporary; senses	high	<1 sec. (vision) few seconds (hearing)	literal
short-term	brief; info. currently being used	limited	<20 seconds	auditory & verbal
long-term	relatively permanent	unlimited (?)	long or perm. (?)	semantic

EXAMPLE (from a Chemistry class)

Name of organic compound	Functional group	Structure
1. Alkane		
2.	$\overset{O}{\underset{H}{\overset{\|}{C}}}$	$\overset{O}{\underset{H}{R-\overset{\|}{C}}}$
3.	$C{\equiv}C$	

4. Concept summary

When to use: Any class with a large amount of information. If you are working with math or computational material (finance, physics, chemistry, etc.), it encourages conceptual thinking in addition to performing calculations.

How to use:

<u>For computational courses</u>

1. Identify the key concepts taught and the various applications related to those concepts.
2. Highlight key information such as: concept title, allowable key formula, definitions, other important information (sign conventions, exceptions, etc) simple example or explanation, list of relevant knowns and unknowns to help distinguish between problems or concepts.
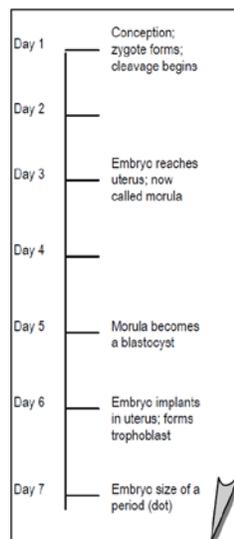
<u>For non-computational courses</u>

1. Identify the main concepts taught
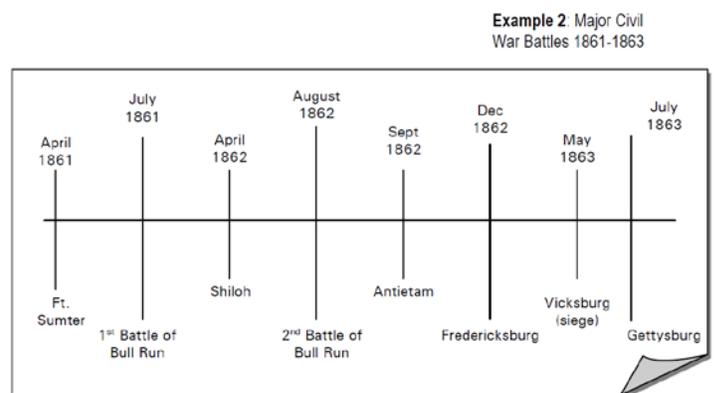2. Highlight definitions, main ideas, important players, old test questions

5. Timelines

When to use: Any class where information needs to be understood in sequence.

- Historical developments: history, anthropology, political science, music, art, theater
- Biological developments: biology, anatomy, physiology
- Human developments: psychology, biology, natural resources, political science

Example 1: Development of an embryo

Day 1	Conception; zygote forms; cleavage begins
Day 2	
Day 3	Embryo reaches uterus; now called morula
Day 4	
Day 5	Morula becomes a blastocyst
Day 6	Embryo implants in uterus; forms trophoblast
Day 7	Embryo size of a period (dot)

Example 2: Major Civil War Battles 1861-1863

Timeline markers (above line): April 1861, July 1861, April 1862, August 1862, Sept 1862, Dec 1862, May 1863, July 1863

Timeline markers (below line): Ft. Sumter, 1st Battle of Bull Run, Shiloh, 2nd Battle of Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg (siege), Gettysburg

6. Diagrams

When to use: Any class with processes, procedures, stages, and steps ex) how a bill becomes a law, the water cycle, photosynthesis.