Learning to take notes effectively will help you organize the information you collect and improve the quality of your final presentation.

1. BEFORE you take a single note from an author, write down or save an accurate and complete bibliographic citation for your bibliography.
2. Prepare a note card (or cards) for each author that includes the author’s name AND the part of your preliminary outline where the information will fit. Create a new note card for each author for each outline category so that when you’re all done taking notes from all the resources you can arrange the note cards to match the preliminary outline and have all information about the same topic together.

   Smith IIB
   “Now is the time…” (p.35)

3. Write down notes as you read, but don’t write down every word. Write down only main points.
4. Notes should consist of KEY WORDS and short fragmented points or VERY short sentences.
5. Write notes in your own words, but be careful not to change the meaning.
6. If you quote the author, quote exactly and write down the page of the quotation.
7. Take notes that have a real value in answering your question. Don’t include unusable information/
8. Keep your note cards together with a top card that has your name and address.
9. After taking notes on a resource, go back over the notes and be sure they make sense – add extra points as needed – don’t rely on your future memory.
10. As you take notes feel free to create a new outline – adding, deleting and renaming and rearranging categories. – You might have to rename your notecards to reflect these changes!
11. When you finish taking notes, arrange the note cards according to the outline, reread each card and write that section of the paper. If your outline is sufficiently detailed, these notes could be a paragraph or two. With a brief outline, these sections could be a page or more.
12. When going from one section to another, use transitional sentences or paragraphs that somehow connect the sections. Good introductory transitional words might be, “in addition to…”,” However”, or “On the other hand”. A good section conclusion could introduce the next section by anticipating the next point.
13. A good introduction to a research paper includes: the research topic, how it fits into the discipline (background), the specific research question that the researcher will answer, and a BRIEF outline of the points that will be covered.
14. The conclusion of the research paper should include, a summary of the points covered in the outline AND a research conclusion based on your investigation.
15. Narratives should be in the third person. Be careful not to be inflammatory or opinionated in your conclusion. It is okay to say, “it has been established by …...”, or “researchers support the opinion that...” Or “research seems to support ...”.
16. However, the terms, “I chose this topic because it interested me...”, or ”I think..” or “it seems to me...”, or “It is not right that...” are not appropriate.