

Note-Taking Templates Print Pack

Every printable sheet from the free page at inchyapp.com/note-taking-methods, in one file. No sign-up, no ads. Last checked October 2, 2026.

1. Note-Taking Methods at a Glance (1 page)

All eight methods on one page: what each looks like, when to use it, what to watch out for.

2. Outline Notes Template (1 page)

Indented levels for main points, details and examples, with a review strip.

3. Charting (Matrix) Notes Template (1 page)

A blank comparison grid: topics across the top, features down the side.

4. Mapping Notes Template (1 page)

A center topic, branch space on a dot grid, and a box for linking words.

5. Sentence Method Template (1 page)

Numbered lines for one idea each, with a margin for marking key points.

6. Boxing Method Template (1 page)

Six labeled boxes for grouping notes by topic, plus a summary line.

7. Flow Notes Page (1 page)

A dot-grid page for connected notes, with a column for questions and links.

8. Sketchnote Page (1 page)

A dot-grid page with a title banner and a small key for icons and arrows.

9. Note-Taking Abbreviations and Symbols (1 page)

Common shortcuts for keeping up in fast lectures, with space for your own.

10. Guided Notes Template (for Instructors) (1 page)

A skeleton handout with blanks for students to complete during class.

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Research claims on the sheets are cited on the sheet or in the Sources list on the web page. Spotted a mistake? Tell us at inchyapp.com/contact.

Note-Taking Methods at a Glance

Eight ways to take notes. Pick one or two that fit the class, try them for two weeks of real lectures, and keep what works. Full instructions and the research: inchyapp.com/note-taking-methods



METHOD 1

Cornell notes

Best for: Lectures you'll be tested on; turning notes into self-quizzes.

Watch out: Skipping the after-class cue and summary steps.

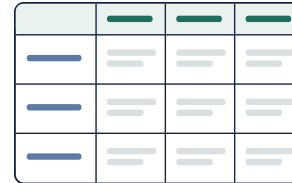


METHOD 2

Outline method

Best for: Well-organized lectures and textbooks with clear headings.

Watch out: Speakers who jump around.

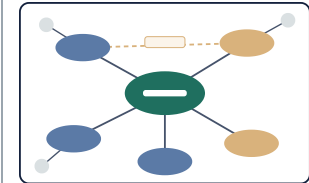


METHOD 3

Charting (matrix) method

Best for: Comparing several things on the same features.

Watch out: Lectures that don't compare anything.



METHOD 4

Mapping: mind maps and concept maps

Best for: Seeing how ideas connect; planning essays.

Watch out: Running out of room in fast lectures.



METHOD 5

Sentence method

Best for: Fast lectures with little obvious structure.

Watch out: No structure until you regroup it.

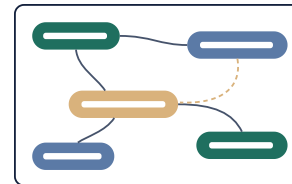


METHOD 6

Boxing method

Best for: Grouping notes by topic on a tablet or after class.

Watch out: Topics that keep coming back. Untested.

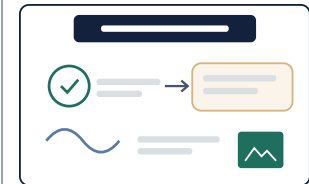


METHOD 7

Flow notes

Best for: Understanding over transcription; discussion classes.

Watch out: Detail-heavy tests. Messy to review alone.



METHOD 8

Sketchnotes

Best for: Visual thinkers; talks and processes.

Watch out: Falling behind while drawing.

Whatever the method: review the same day by covering your notes and answering questions from memory (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006, *Psychological Science*). Matrix finding: Kauffman & Kiewra, 2010, *Instructional Science*. Concept maps: Nesbit & Adesope, 2006, *Review of Educational Research*.

Outline Notes

Main points at the margin, details indented once, examples indented twice. The guides on the left are only a suggestion; follow the lecture’s real structure.

Course / topic	Date	Page
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After class: turn each main point into a question, cover the details, and answer from memory.

Charting (Matrix) Notes

Write the things you’re comparing across the top and the features down the side. Leave a cell blank rather than guessing; blank cells show you what to look up.

	Topic	Topic	Topic	Topic	Topic
Feature					
Feature					
Feature					
Feature					
Feature					
Feature					

After class, read across each row: what do the items share, and which one is different? Course: _____ Date: _____

Mapping Notes

Topic in the center. A branch for each main idea, details off each branch. Draw cross-links between branches and label them ("causes," "part of," "opposes").

main topic

Linking words

leads to · causes · is part of ·
is a type of · requires ·
opposes · is evidence for

Questions to check

Sentence Method

One new idea per numbered line. Skip a line when the topic changes. Star key points in the right margin. Within a day, regroup the lines under headings.

Course / topic	Date	Page
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
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16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
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21.		
22.		
23.		
24.		
25.		

Ran out of numbers? Keep going on the back or a blank page.

Boxing Method

One topic per box. When the topic changes, move to the next box and give the finished one a short label. To review, cover a box and say what's in it.

Course / topic	Date	Page
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Box label

Box label

Box label

Box label

Box label

Box label

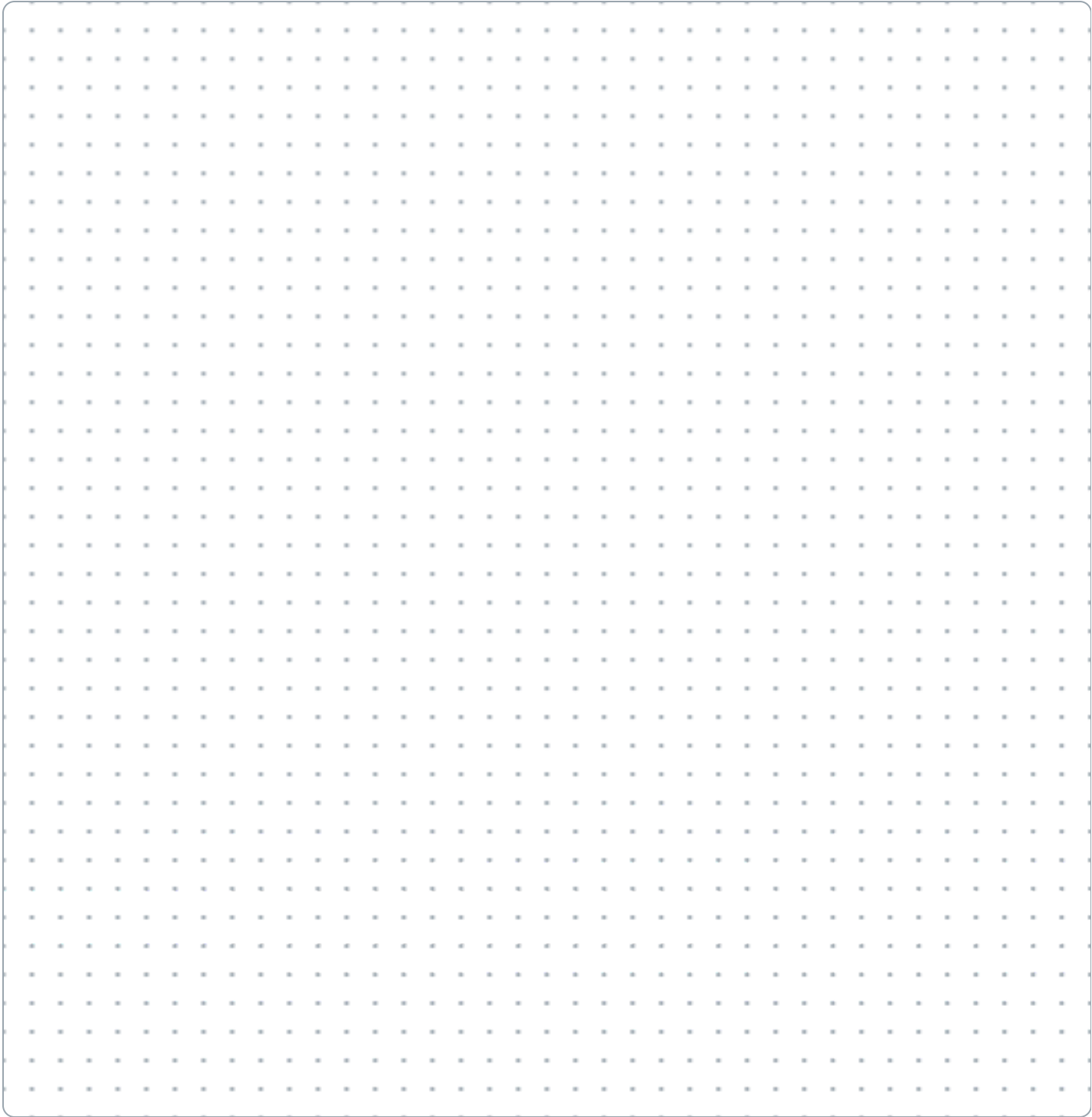
How the boxes connect:

Course / topic	Date	Page
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After class, list any facts you'll need for a test separately. Flow notes skip detail on purpose.

INCHY NOTE-TAKING METHODS

Title / speaker / date



My icons: ★ key idea ? question → leads to □ to do ○ person ! surprise _____ _____

Sketch lightly during the talk; add detail and color afterward. Ideas, not art (Rohde, 2013).

Note-Taking Abbreviations and Symbols

A consistent set of shortcuts helps you keep up with fast speakers. Pick the ones you'll actually use, and add your own for words that come up again and again in your courses.

Write	Meaning
w/	with
w/o	without
b/c	because
→	leads to, causes
←	comes from, caused by
↑ / ↓	increase / decrease
≈	about, roughly
≠	not the same as
∴	therefore
vs.	versus, compared with
e.g.	for example
i.e.	that is
ex	example
def	definition
imp	important
?	I don't understand this yet
☆	the instructor stressed this
[]	look this up later

My shortcut	Meaning

Keeping up

- Listen for signals: "the key point," "there are four reasons," anything repeated.
- Drop small words. Keep nouns, verbs and numbers.
- Missed something? Leave a gap and a ? and fill it the same day.
- Write examples down. They often come back on tests.

Guided Notes Template (for Instructors)

Replace the gray instructions with your lecture's outline, then remove key terms, numbers and examples, leaving a line for each. Students fill the blanks during class. Don't blank out so much that students can't listen at the same time.

Course / topic	Date	Page
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1. [Section heading from your slides]

The term _____ means _____.

There are _____ main _____: (1) _____, (2) _____, (3) _____.

Example from class: _____

My question or example:

2. [Section heading from your slides]

The term _____ means _____.

There are _____ main _____: (1) _____, (2) _____, (3) _____.

Example from class: _____

My question or example:

3. [Section heading from your slides]

The term _____ means _____.

There are _____ main _____: (1) _____, (2) _____, (3) _____.

Example from class: _____

My question or example:

Research: guided notes improved note accuracy and quiz scores in a review of eight studies (Konrad, Joseph & Eveleigh, 2009, *Education and Treatment of Children*, 32(3), 421–444).