

Using Note Cards

(Or, Academic Flashing)

OBJECTIVES:

The use of note cards is an old and effective method of learning information. This study aid will:

1. Identify the advantages of using note cards:
2. Describe how to make your own note cards: and,
3. Offer suggestions on how to use note cards.

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF NOTE CARDS

There are several advantages to using note cards. First, simply making the cards makes you an active learner. You initiate the process of asking what is important, how is this material related, what should be learned. Thus, developing note cards assists in identifying main ideas, significant facts, crucial definitions, and/or predicting possible test questions. Second, because the note cards are smaller and more durable than regular notebook paper, you can carry them easily in a pocket or purse for studying between classes, during breaks at work, or even during TV commercials. And, third, using note cards employs the time-honored technique of repetition for learning.

II. DEVELOPING NOTE CARDS

Writing note cards is a simple process; deciding what to write on them is the demanding part. To develop note cards, follow the following steps:

1. In making notecards it is probably best to use 3" by 5" index cards that are blank on one side and lined on the other side.
2. On the blank side of the card (front side) write the word, main idea, topic or whatever it is you want to learn.
3. On the lined side of the card (flip side) write the definition, supporting details, facts or whatever else you want to associate with what is on the front.
4. Note cards can be used for definitions, lists, fact questions, and essay questions. An example of each type of note card is shown below.

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Front Side		Flip Side
<i>Scalawags</i>	Definition Note Card	<i>Dishonest southern politicians who were out to enrich themselves by swearing that they had not borne arms against the United States.</i>
<i>List the three branches of government</i>	Listing Note Card	<i>Executive Legislative Judicial</i>
<i>Why did the U.S. not join the League of Nations</i>	Fact Question Note Card	<i>Many Americans opposed the idea of getting involved with the affairs of foreign countries. They felt that such a course could lead to war.</i>
<i>Explain the role of the U.S. President</i>	Essay Question Note Card	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Commander and Chief of the Armed Forces</i> <i>2. Makes treaties</i> <i>3. Chooses foreign representatives</i> <i>4. Appoints Supreme Court judges</i> <i>5. Sees that laws are carried out</i> <i>6. Vetoes acts of legislation</i>

III. USING NOTE CARDS

Your note cards can be used in a variety of ways. First, you can simply go repeatedly through all of your cards for a particular course. Second, after you have learned some of the material, you can quiz yourself by creating two piles of cards: one for the questions you already know and one for the questions on which you need additional study. Third, you can have a friend or roommate flash the cards for you while you respond. Fourth, if others in your class also make note cards, you can study together by flashing each other's cards. Finally, don't forget to occasionally go through your cards using the flip side first. This can be very helpful in preparing for objective or multiple-choice test questions.

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