

M9

Highlighting essential information; taking notes

9.1

Marking, highlighting, coloring



Important →

When you read the content of a text that you should remember (e.g. for a test or a presentation), it is best to mark the most important passages. This has great advantages: when you re-read the text, you don't have to focus on everything and can limit yourself to the marked up passages.

You can mark the text in various ways – try some of them!

- In books that must not be marked up (particularly borrowed books) it may be useful to lightly underline or draw a small line with a pencil in the margin. Other possibilities: insert bookmarkers to indicate an important passage or use post-it arrows or notes.
- Draw a short line or a cross in the margins: for very important passages draw a double line or an exclamation mark, or a question mark if things are unclear.
- Underline important words or passages, preferably with different colors.
- Highlight important words or passages with a marker. If you don't have a marker, make a circle with a colored pencil. Use various colors for this purpose as well.

9.2

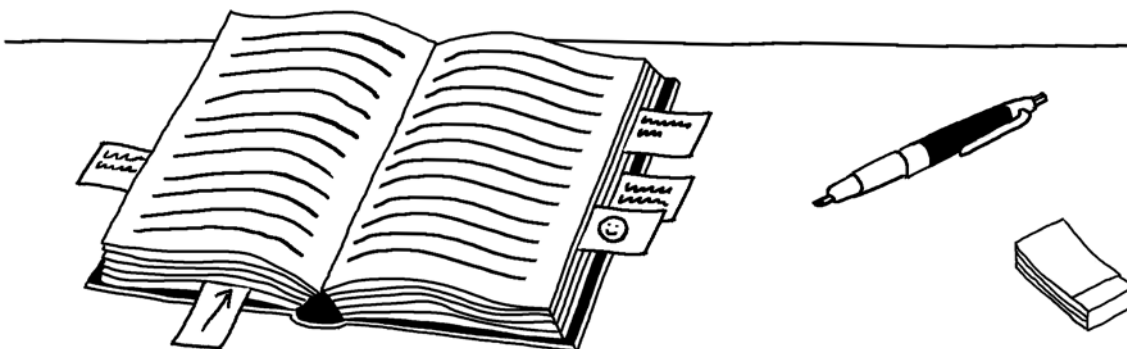
Marginal notes

It is also very useful to write notes in the margins.

- These can be keywords to a passage in the text (almost like subtitles; example: «rivers in Turkey», «racism today»), or
- remarks and questions about the content (example: «unclear», «great quote»).

With books that you cannot mark up, you can proceed as follows: insert book markers, post-it notes or arrows or other pieces of paper, referencing the passage with your commentary.

Clearly, taking notes is important for all sorts of possible reasons: to summarize something, to collect ideas, and to remember something.

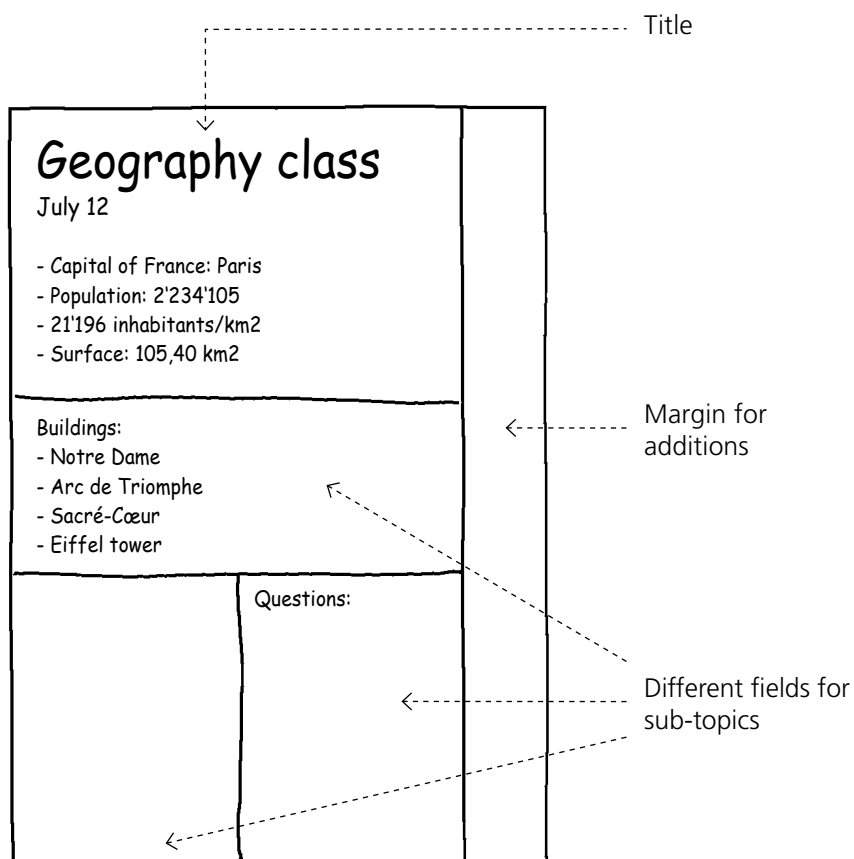


9.3

To make your notes really helpful, you should consider a few tips:

- Write legibly, even when time is pressing. Illegible notes will not help you.
- Write a title on top of your page. Leave a margin of 4–5 cm on the right side for comments.
- Write in keywords; don't write complete sentences.
- Write down only really important details. For training purposes, try to summarize in 10–15 keywords a story or a newspaper article.

Example of a clearly arranged notepad:



- Depending on the theme, it can also be useful if you sub-divide your notes according to different sub-topics. It is best if you divide your notepad into different fields and label them accordingly. Example: «most important contents», «also interesting», «questions», etc..
- Use abbreviations, arrows, symbols, sketches (e.g. "tel." for "telephone"; →; :-); ☺).