Note Taking

Effective note-taking can:

- Ensure the accuracy of direct quotes and citations you use in your writing
- Improve your paraphrases of other people's ideas
- Help you develop and organize your own original ideas

Here are some tips that can improve your note-taking and lessen the risk that you will commit unintentional plagiarism.

- When taking notes, do not copy words directly from a source unless you intend to quote that source.
  - Instead, read carefully, think and then write the main ideas in your own words to paraphrase the source.
  - Once you've rewritten the main ideas into your own words, be sure to note the source of the ideas. Remember: you still need to provide a proper citation when you paraphrase the works of others.
  - By taking this step in your research notes instead of paraphrasing directly from a source into your draft, you provide yourself with the time and space to think about the main ideas separately from the writing process.
  - In your notes, consider using different colored pens or different colored fonts to identify your words and paraphrases separately from the words of the authors you're reading.
- When taking notes for a source that you intend to quote directly, the first thing you should do is include the citation information for the source in your notes.
  - By including the source information directly next to the text, you provide yourself with a visual cue that you've copied the words verbatim.
  - In your notes, be certain to include quotation marks when you've copied text directly from a source to ensure you'll incorporate those words as a direct quotation in your own work.
- When collecting notes from different works written by different authors, draw lines in between notes pertaining to different sources.
• This delineation will remind you that you need to provide a new citation for each source.
• When you're collecting notes electronically in a Word document from other sources of online information, avoid too much cutting-and-pasting, which can lead to unintentional plagiarism as you collect information without paraphrasing, identifying authors, or including citation information.