

Big 6 Skill™ #4: Use of Information

READING, VIEWING, AND LISTENING

Much of the information you locate will be available in printed form. You will need to scan for needed topics, then skim over the text to determine if it is useful for your research needs. Careful reading (and re-reading!) may be required for longer or more difficult passages.

When using Internet web pages or other electronic sources, use the "Find" option to locate key words and phrases.

Other sources, such as television, film, video, DVD, radio or audiocassettes, will need to be viewed or heard. Make use of the "pause," "fast forward," or "rewind" controls to review or locate important sections.

TAKING NOTES

Effective note taking is essential to the success of your finished product. It is important to be organized and to use strategies that will ensure accuracy as well as save time.

TIPS FOR NOTE TAKING

- Keep your notes in a single place.
- Take your time and work carefully.
- Read over the information more than once.
- Think about what you have read.
- Say it to yourself in your own words.
- Use phrases, abbreviations, and symbols.
- Write the information in your own words or use quotation marks to show that you have used someone else's words.
- Record the source of the information accurately and completely.

METHODS FOR NOTE TAKING

Once you have located information in a variety of sources, begin to read for answers to your questions. When you find information that answers a question, you should begin taking notes. There are three different methods of note-taking:

1. **Summarize:** Use this method to record details about very large amounts of information. Use key words and phrases, and be sure to include names, dates, and other information that is not general knowledge.
2. **Paraphrase:** Use this method to take detailed notes on specific passages by re-stating the information in your own words.
3. **Quote Directly:** Use this method when the author's original words would enhance your writing. When you use this method of note-taking, you must be careful to include quotation marks around ALL of the author's words.

It is important to remember that copying someone else's words or ideas is **plagiarism**. **Plagiarism is considered stealing**. You must take notes in your own words and give credit to the source of information.

RECORDING SOURCE INFORMATION FOR WORKS CITED PAGE

No matter what method of note taking you choose, you must always be sure to record the identifying information about its source. In order to avoid plagiarism and to help you later when you must create a Works Cited page or use internal citations, record the source information as you take notes.

The Golden Rule of Citing Sources: If you use information that comes from anywhere but your own mind, record the identifying information about the source immediately. For all sources, you will need to know:

- What kind of source is it?
- Who wrote it?
- What is the title of the source?
- When was it written?

For some sources, you may also need to know:

- What is the title of the article?
- Who is the publisher?
- Where was it published?
- What is the page number(s), volume, or edition?
- What is the web address (URL)?
- When was it accessed?

USING DIFFERENT FORMATS FOR YOUR NOTES

You already know that there are three different methods for note-taking and that you must record the source information as you take notes, but there are also many ways to format or set up your notes. You may be required by your teacher to use one or more specific formats, or you may have the option to choose a format. The following formats are most helpful in keeping notes organized and clear.

1. Preparing Index Cards

Index cards may be used to record sources and notes. This method is best for longer reports or reports in which many questions need to be answered, particularly when several sources will be used. Use a separate index card for each source and idea, or sub-topic. Cards can be easily sorted by sub-topic. New information can be added quickly and notes that are no longer needed can be placed in a discard pile.

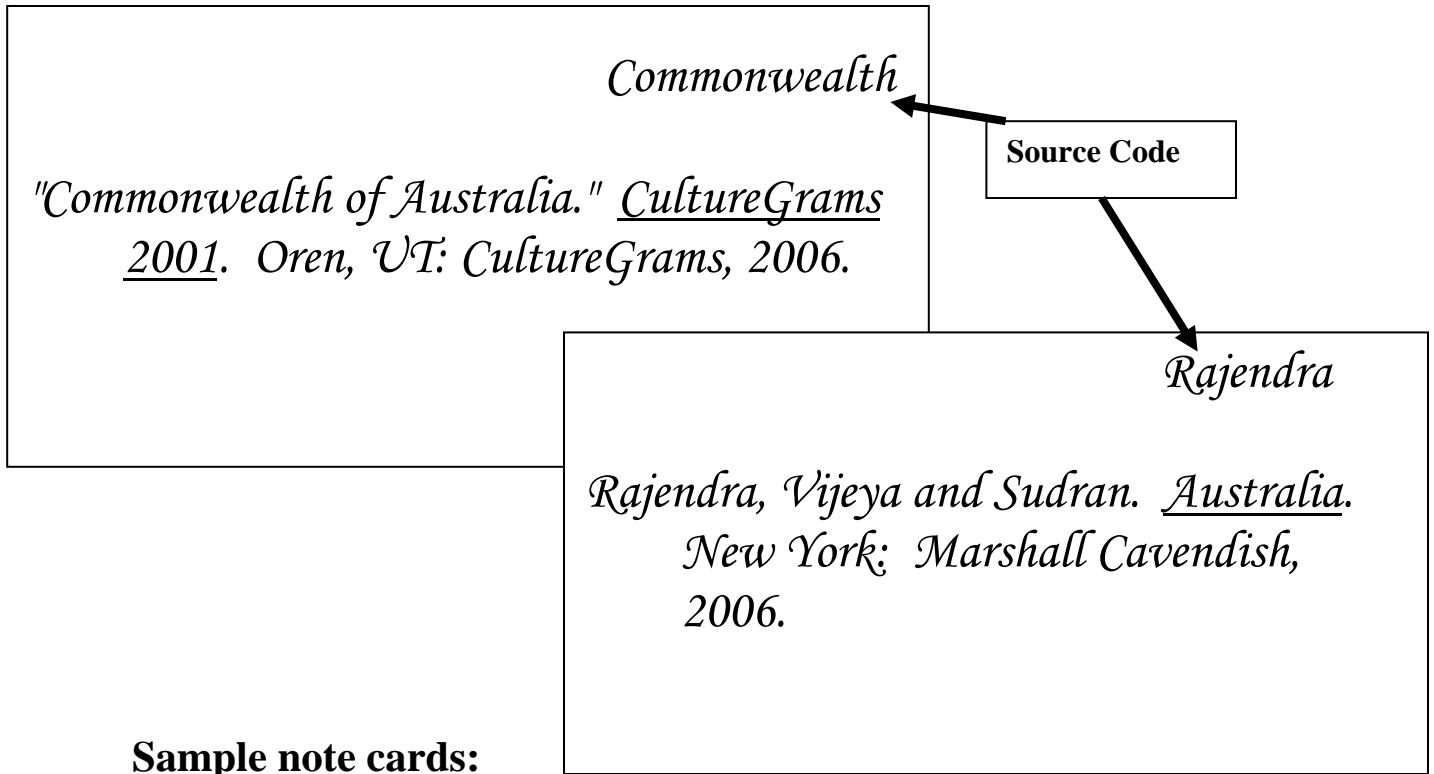
Steps for making a source card: This will provide the information needed for your *Works Cited* page.

- See sample entries beginning on page
- Use a separate index card for each source.
- Put a code in the corner of the source card.

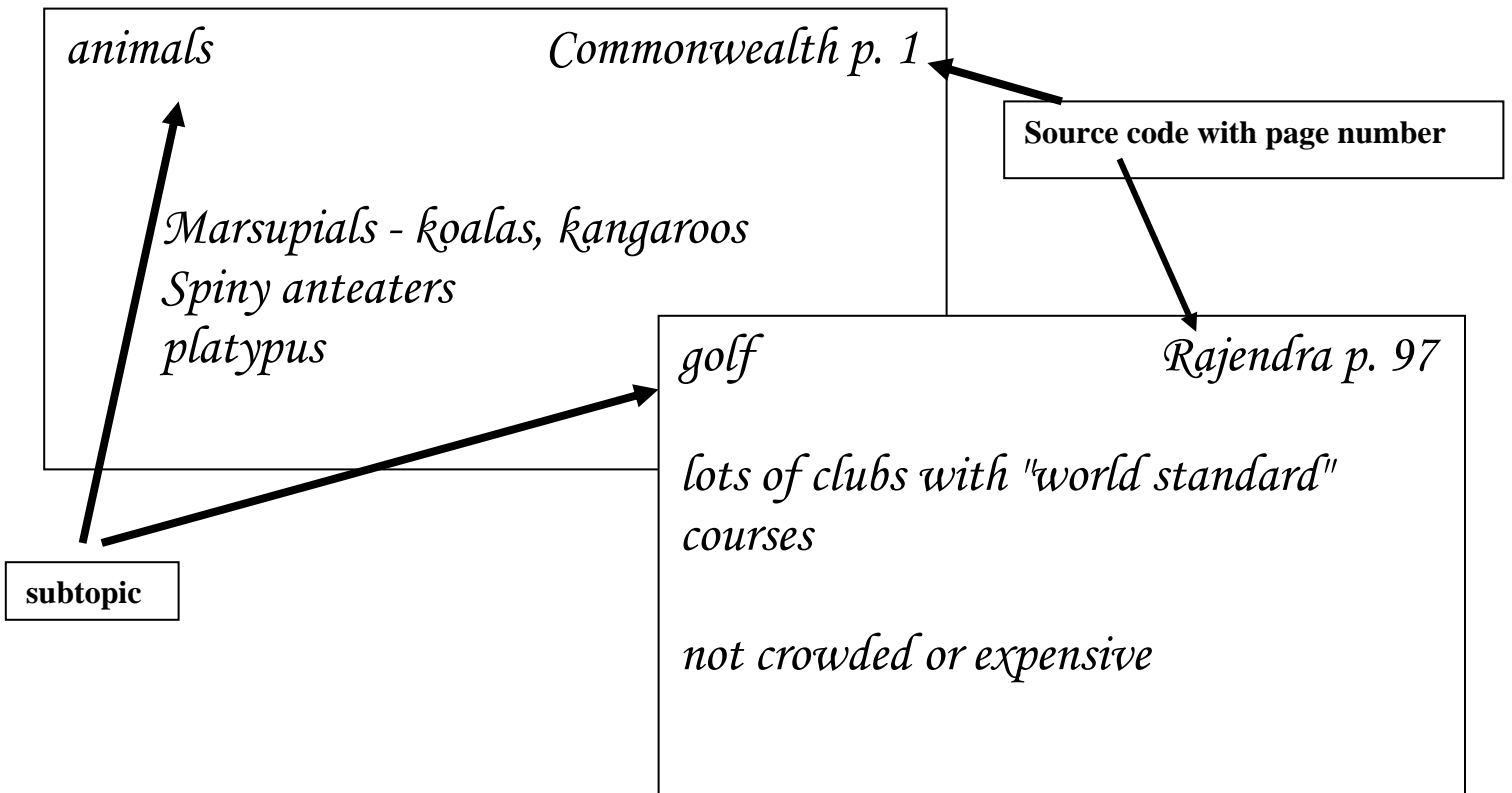
Steps for making a note card: This will provide information to be used in the content of your paper.

- Label the card with the main idea from the question to be answered.
- Write the notes on one side of the card. Use brief phrases, in your own words, unless quoting. The notes must be about one main idea.
- Write the Source Code and page number on the card.
- Two to six note cards are suggested for each paragraph of the report.

Sample source cards:



Sample note cards:



2. Using Note Sheets

Note sheets may be used to record notes. This method is best for shorter reports or those that have fewer questions to be answered, particularly when only a few sources are used.

Steps for using note sheets:

- Record the source information on the back of the note sheet.
- Use brief phrases, in your own words, unless quoting.
- Indicate the main idea either above or next to the note.
- Write the page numbers before or after the note.

A web page was used as the source. When printed, the web page is 10 pages long. We used these page numbers on the note sheet.

Sample note sheet (front):

PAGE NUMBER	FACTS, NAMES, QUOTATIONS (WORDS & PHRASES!) (Culture notes)
8	British and Irish descent
8	Immigrants from Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Turkey
8	230,000 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders
8	Speak many different languages
	(Activities to do)
7	Whalewatching, surfing, hiking, and more
2	Festivals, such as Writer's Festival, Adelaide Arts Festival

--Notice that the main idea or topic of the notes is clearly marked.

Sample note sheet (back):

WEB SITE (*must have at least 3 of these items)

You must include as many items as available. The items marked by the asterisk are the most important.*

Author of Article (if given): _____

Article Title Web Page or Section (if available): Australia

***Title of Web Site:** Lonely Planet Worldguide

***WEB Address:** <<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/australasia/australia/printable.htm>>

Date of Web Page (if given): 2006 ***Date of Access:** 11/07/06

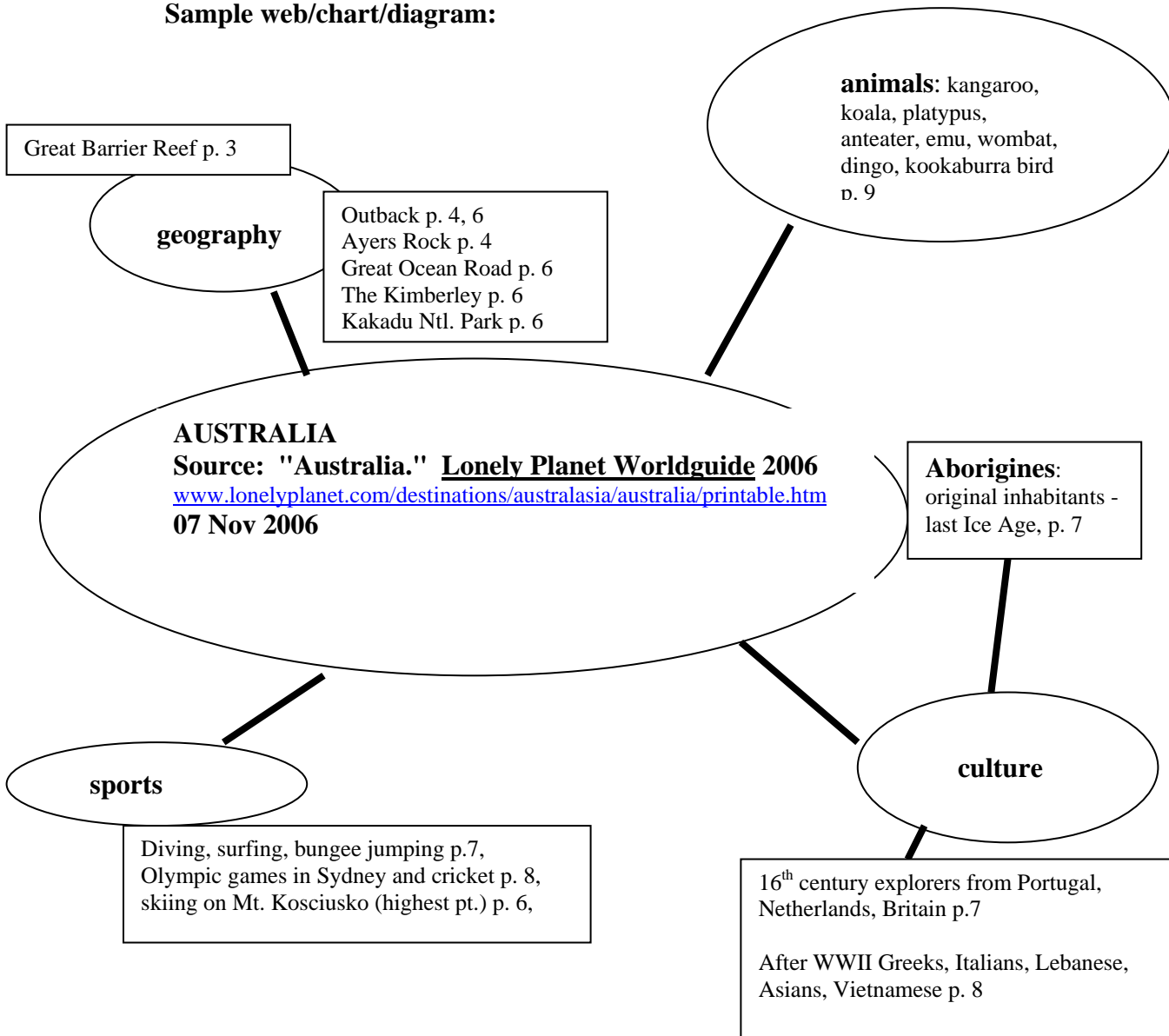
3. Using Webs, Charts, and Diagrams

Webs, charts, and diagrams are best for quick note-taking to show relationships between pieces of information, organize main ideas and supporting details, as well as to show a time line, cause and effect, or the steps in a process.

Steps for using webs, charts, and diagrams:

- You may draw these yourself, use a program like Inspiration to create a chart or diagram, or use a handout provided by your teacher.
- Use only words and phrases to record information.
- Include a page number and source for each note. (All notes on this web come from the same source, shown in the center.)

Sample web/chart/diagram:



4. Highlighting

Highlighting is an important skill that can save you time in your research as well as ensure the accuracy of the information in your final product. This method of note-taking is most effective when you are using a photocopy, information printed from a web site or on-line database.

Using a highlighter can be difficult until you learn how to determine which pieces of information should be highlighted and which should not. Before you begin highlighting, read the information without a pen in your hand. When you have finished reading, ask yourself these questions:

- What was the main idea?
- Were any words repeated or emphasized?
- Were there any technical or specific terms used to discuss the topic?
- What proper names of people, places, or objects were mentioned?
- Were there any important dates mentioned?
- Were there any direct quotes (someone else's words in quotation marks) that caught your attention or that you felt you could not paraphrase or summarize?

Refer to these questions as you skim the article, but this time with the highlighter in your hand.

Steps for highlighting:

- Read the article carefully to determine the main idea and to identify important names, dates, and terms.
- Skim the article a second time and use a highlighter to highlight or mark only the most important information.
- Review the information you have highlighted and make additional notes in the margins of the printout if necessary.
- Evaluate your work by making sure that the information you have highlighted answers the questions above. If you have highlighted something that does not answer one of those questions, you probably do not need it.
- Make sure that the source information is recorded on the photocopy or printed page. You will need this for your Works Cited page.

The Golden Rule of Highlighting: If you have highlighted more than words and phrases, and perhaps a few direct quotes, you probably have highlighted too much information. Only the words or phrases that answer the questions on page 25 should be highlighted.

Sample highlighted article:

Culture

Australia is a multicultural society. Until WWII, Australians were predominantly of British and Irish descent, but that has changed dramatically. Large immigrations from Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Lebanon and Turkey followed the war and have been supplemented by more recent influxes of immigrants from Asia. There are also about 230,000 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Many Australians speak Italian, Greek, Lebanese, Vietnamese or Turkish as a first language. English-speaking Australians are liable to use a hotchpotch of indigenous slang and shortened words that often make their speech impenetrable.

From page 8:

"Australia." Lonely Planet Worldguide 2001. Lonely Planet. 07 November 2006.

<<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/australasia/australia/printable.htm>>.

A special note about using self-adhesive notes:

In addition to highlighting you may find it helpful to use self-adhesive notes such as Post-It© notes on your printouts. These will allow you to further mark the text. You can also use these notes in books or other media that you cannot highlight. Begin by reading the information carefully, asking yourself the same questions you would ask before you begin highlighting. Then use the self-adhesive notes to mark the text as you would with a highlighter, writing information on the note to help you organize your material when you are ready to put it all together.

5. Taking Electronic Notes

A. Printing and Highlighting

For online sources, taking notes electronically and highlighting offer the most efficient ways of capturing the information you need.

If you find a valuable article in an online database, you can either send the article to your home e-mail address, save it, or print it at school with the permission of your teacher or media specialist. Be sure to include all of the necessary information you will need to document the source for your Works Cited page. You can then begin highlighting.

B. Copying and Pasting with a Word Processor

If you find valuable information on a web site or online database, you can copy and paste the information to a Word document that can be highlighted later. Copying and pasting allows you to save only what you need, as well as all of the source information. PowerPoint can also be used to collect and sort notes.

Steps for copying and pasting to a Word document:

- Open a new document and type “My Websites” at the top. Then save the document to your personal drive and minimize it so that you can access it later.
- When you find information on a web site that will be useful, copy the web address (URL) to your document, as well as any text that you would like to summarize, paraphrase, or quote.
- Before you locate another web site, find the source information that is needed for the Works Cited page and save it to the document as well.
- Be sure to save your document periodically so that you do not lose all of the valuable information you have collected there.

Remember that when you copy and paste, you should copy the same type of information that you would highlight on a printed page. Ask yourself the same questions that you would ask before you begin highlighting. If you are not certain about which information will be helpful, save the URL (web address) to your Word document and come back to it later once you know more about your topic or have more time to read it carefully.

BEWARE: If not used properly, copying and pasting can lead to plagiarism. At some point, you must summarize, paraphrase, or quote information. Your final report should be stated in your own words, as much as possible!