

Note Cards

What is the purpose? It is useful to take notes on index cards because it gives you the flexibility to change the order of your notes and group them together easily. It is a way to “visualize” your paper before you start writing.

There are two types of note cards:

1. Source Cards
2. Research Cards

Source Cards:

What is the purpose? A source card is for you to write your bibliographic entry, why your source is important to your paper (this information will later be used for your annotated bibliography), and to assign each source a number. (I like to assign numbers in order.) You will use these numbers on your research cards.

Research Cards:

What is the purpose? A research card is for you to write a *single fact or main point* from a single source. I personally like to make these direct quotes. You will also include a *subtopic heading* (a what? See below) on your research card. The purpose of including the heading is for you to know exactly where this piece of information will present itself in your paper. You will include the source code or number (which directly correlates with your source cards) of the source in which you located this information. The last thing you will include is the page number (if applicable) from the page on which you found the quote. Be sure you are accurate when you write your quote/information down.

~~(Other pieces of information that could be included: reasoning behind writing down the quote, further explanation, distinguishing between fact and opinion, ellipses (...) if needed, brackets ([]) if needed, etc.)

Subtopic Headings:

Your main topic is obviously what your paper is about. Your subtopics are smaller topics within your main topic. *For example, if your main topic is “abortion”, you subtopics may be “abortion among teens”, “abortion among the disabled”, and “abortion among the lower class”.* **Subtopics are created in order to help you organize your information!** (When I start researching, I usually do not know what all my subtopics are going to be yet; that’s the beauty of continual research! As soon as I come across another piece of information that doesn’t fit with any of my other subtopics, I create a new one. When it comes to actually writing my paper, I may delete some subtopics (ie remove some of my research cards) or combine similar subtopics.)