**Forming your own summary notes**

**Why do it?**

The act of writing information down consolidates it in your memory in a way that you can’t achieve by only reading. While there are [many other methods that you should employ while studying](http://www.thestudygurus.com/learning-styles/) – study notes are a must. Did you know that research shows that just by reading over what you have just written your memory retention can increase by **80%!**

The steps to writing study notes that really work:

1. **You must write your notes in your own words.**

Simply copying text straight from a book won’t achieve anything at all. You shouldn’t write anything down unless they understand it and can verbalise it easily.

1. **Study notes work best when they’re written in an organised manner.**

This means your notes should be written under headings and subheadings. Each of your subjects should already be broken down into these smaller pieces using [subject maps](http://www.thestudygurus.com/best-type-of-exam-preparation/).

For example, in Biology your study notes for this topic should be written under the heading – Biology, and then under subheadings, such as Micro-organisms, Cells and DNA, Inheritance, and so on.

Having organised study notes is really important for later on when your reading over your study notes and want to find something.

1. **You should write your notes in an exercise book to save yourself the hassle of losing random bits of paper.**

If you use one book per subject, then all your study for each subject is in one place and will be easy to find.

1. **It doesn’t really matter if you write your study notes out in full sentences, or in some form of short-hand, or a mixture of both.**

What is important is that, however you write them, the notes make sense to *you*. It might take a little bit of trial and error, but your study notes should become personalised to you.

Writing study notes in your own way is going to ensure you retain the largest amount of information possible, even include diagrams/tables/graphs to break it up.

1. **Use a colour coding system**

Using a colour coding system is important to break up the text visually to assist spatial processing but also to help recall information. Structuring your notes using trigger words and a colour coding system means that when you are revising your notes you are simultaneously quizzing yourself.

