Control FREAKS!

Note-making techniques

Why do you make notes?

To record information.

To make understanding of a lot of text easier?

For assignments – to show you have researched information?

To remember things later?

Steps to notemaking

- Start with 'the big picture' of the topic. Use a reference book or ask someone to help you get started.

- Identify the information you need by asking questions.

- Construct headings or 'focus' questions to group ideas.

- Skim texts to find the information you need.

- Identify the main ideas and key words.

- Take notes eliminating unnecessary words.

- Record where you found your information.

Identifying key words and phrases

You make notes by recording key words and phrases.

Key words and phrases are the important words or groups of words (phrases) that help you to record the main or key ideas in a text.

You always start by thinking about focus questions on the subject about which you are taking notes. If, for example, you were investigating hardware, some of the focus questions might be:

1.   What do we mean by hardware?

2.   What does hardware include?

Have a look at the following piece of information on hardware. The key words and

'Hardware is the <u>physical component</u> of any <u>computer system</u>, which consists of (1) <u>a central processing unit</u> (CPU) and <u>main memory</u>, (2) devices for entering data (called <u>input devices</u>), (3) devices for displaying results or information (called <u>output devices</u>) and (4) storage device for storing programs and data for future processing. <u>All</u> categories of <u>computers</u>, from supercomputers to mainframes to 'minis' to microcomputers, <u>process data in the same manner</u> using these four types of hardware. The <u>differences *between machines*</u> are differences in their <u>processing power, cost, physical size</u>, and <u>number of</u> possible <u>input and output devices</u>.'

Stern, N and Stern, R 1996, *Computing in the Information Age*, 2nd edn, John Wiley & Sons, New York, p2.

phrases have been underlined.

Things to remember when choosing key words/phrases

◉   Take only words that will help you to answer the focus questions.

◉   Don't take extra words; for example, 'are differences in their' and 'possible' are not needed to make sense from the key words.

◉   Make sure you write down the essential words so that you can understand what this means; for example, without the words 'physical components' you don't know what 'central processing unit or input devices' refer to.

Turning key words/phrases into notes

You then transfer the key words into a note-making framework like this one:

Focus questions	Key words and phrases
What do we mean by hardware?	• physical components of computer systems
What does hardware include?	• central processing unit • main memory • input devices • output devices • storage device

Have a go at identifying the key words and phrases in the next paragraph:

Focus questions	Key words and phrases

"***Software*** is the set of instructions that enables a computer to process data. Most basic to the function of the computer is the operating systems software, which controls and monitors the machine. Applications software allows the computer to perform the specific operations you choose, such as preparing a report, balancing a chequebook, playing a game, sending messages or creating designs and graphs. It is through our choice of software that we use computers to work more quickly and accurately, giving us more freedom to think and to create."

Stern, N and Stern, R 1996, *Computing in the Information Age*, 2nd edn, John Wiley & Sons, New York, p2.

What is software?	
Distinguish between operating systems software and applications software.	

One student's key words/phrases are shown at the bottom of this page. Compare this with the key words/phrases you identified. Are there any differences? What are they?

Focus questions	Key words and phrases
What is software?	• set of instructions • for processing data
Distinguish between operating systems software and applications software.	• applications – allows specific operations to be performed • eg playing a game