Ensuring Success at Seminary

NOTE-TAKING: THE PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

FOCUSBING THE TOPIC

The crucial first step for writing any essay or paper is to establish a focus on an exact topic that is appropriate and reasonable given the length and depth of the assignment. There are a number of strategies to do this:

* Decide on a specific question or problem that needs to be answered/addressed
* Focus on a concise historical/social/intellectual context and incident/issue within that time
* Create a purpose that is realistic and manageable given the scope of the assignment
* Make certain that there are substantial resources to provide evidence and information sufficient to analyze and synthesize
FOCUSING THE TOPIC

Strategic elements to consider:

* Definition of the specific **Audience**
* Definition of the exact **Purpose**
* Definition of your **Stance** and **Voice** as the writer
* Facts, definitions, concepts relevant to the topic (accepted and validated)
* Perspectives by experts, analysis, and critics

DEVELOPING THE THESIS STATEMENT

Once the significant issues of purpose, audience and stance are defined, the next step is to develop a thesis statement. This sentence has the following characteristics:

* An judgement, attitude or opinion concerning the topic which will be developed in the paper
* 8 to 15 words in a declarative voice
* Placement somewhere in the introductory paragraph, usually near the end
* A clear and distinct point of view
FORMAL RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE TEMPLATE

The more significant a research paper is, the more likely that a formal outline will be required. The following link contains a template to guide the writing of an important research paper:
http://img.docstoccdn.com/thumb/orig/89479826.png

ANNOTATING A TEXT

In the happy event of owning a text, one can readily take rudimentary notes in the margins and on the end sheets. This traditional practice ensures comprehension of the text and allows for a ready reference review of the crucial elements at a later date.
my mind which I cannot distinguish from actual remembrance, of the touch of Peggotty's forefinger as she used to hold it out to me, and of its being roughened by needlework, like a pocket nutmeg-grater.

This may be fancy, though I think the memory of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose; just as I believe the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy. Indeed, I think that most grown men who are remarkable in this respect, may with greater propriety be said not to have lost the faculty, than to have acquired it; the rather, as I generally observe such men to retain a certain freshness, and gentle-
"How to Mark a Book" is an interesting and engaging short essay on ‘marking’ a book. It is written by Mortimer Adler, a renowned man of letters and influential scholar of philosophy and rhetoric.

https://docs.google.com/a/lancasterseminary.edu/file/d/0B1tRmQPHNYBpWVZQWjNyZW50anM/edit

Using the outline as an organizational guide, many writers of long research employ note-cards to assemble quotes, evidence, ideas, and insights from the resources that comprise the evidence for the major points of the paper. This system can be abbreviated with the use of the Roman numerals from the outline and the author of the resource’s last name from the working bibliography.
A crucial element of note-taking that is important to master is the taking and use of quotations. To use quotes inaccurately or worse, unethically, can result in serious and permanent damage to one's public reputation. Therefore students need to have an in-depth understanding of the types and uses of quotations in writing.
**TYPES AND USES OF QUOTATIONS**

- **Quotations** must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.

- **Paraphrasing** involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.

- **Summarizing** involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

**ILLUSTRATIONS IN PARAPHRASING AND SUMMARIZING QUOTATIONS**

Some useful examples and exercises in developing paraphrases and summaries of main ideas and concepts are contained in the Purdue Online Writing Lab site: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/
CORNELL NOTES TEMPLATE AND SAMPLE

Template:
o=37877&l=sem&qsrc=999&qo=semQuery&ad=semD&ap=google.com&an=google_s&am=broad

DIAGLECTICAL READING LOG: SOURCE

Reading logs are useful tools to keep organized notes of entire sources in one place.
The following is a template that can be customized for many purposes: