

# 5 Steps Notes System

Q&A

# What is the 5 Steps Notes System?

The System is a 5 Steps Academy proprietary and scientifically proven process of organising students studies around their personal notes and aimed to:

- boost understanding,
- significantly increase knowledge retention rate,
- reduce exam preparation stress and time,
- enhance students organisation skills
- Improve discipline and homework monitoring

# What are the age groups the System is designed for?

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The System is mandatory for secondary students. Upper primary students are welcome to join.

# What is the scientific background the System is based on?

Tons of research shows that the knowledge retention rate is very low if a student just reads textbooks or listens to lectures. Whooping 5 % just to give you an idea. Re-reading is almost useless. Taking notes passively increases the retention rate but not much. The key breakthrough in the efficiency of studying lies in processing your notes, particularly, restating concepts in your own words by answering key questions and then systematically reviewing your processed notes (we call it Zero Gap Pyramid).

Teaching students corresponding techniques, regular testing and proper supervision by school and parents produces remarkable results. Again, just to give you an idea, 75% retention. So just a quick review before a grading test will result in an A\* with no stress or waste of time on ineffective rote memorization and desperate last week cramming.

# What kind of notes does the System use?

5 Steps Notes System is based on two groups of notes: Permanent Notes and Temporary Notes.

Temporary notes are used for work that doesn't need to be saved for more than a week whereas Permanent notes form students' own handmade textbooks, written in their own words and reviewed regularly and before tests.

Permanent Notes are subdivided into Classroom Permanent Notes and Homework Permanent Notes. Temporary Notes are subdivided into Fleeting notes and Homework Practice (some masterpieces from your Homework practice can be added to Permanent notes if you prefer)

# Students use four types of notes:

- Classwork Permanent Notes
- Feeting notes
- Homework Permanent Notes
- Homework practice

- **Classwork Permanent Notes** for key concepts, model worked solutions and important facts from the textbook - only for Math and Science.
- **Feeting notes** is a working area students can use without caring of beauty, structure or consistency of notes, for teacher explanations, observations, ideas and practice questions in classrooms. It's also used for jotting down information from textbooks and other resources at home as a preliminary step before preparing structured and good looking Permanent notes.
- **Homework Permanent Notes** are for key concepts, model worked solutions and important facts added from corresponding temporary notes and sections of the textbook assigned as homework.
- **Homework practice** is a designated area in notebooks for worked solutions for Math and Science practice questions, essays for English and Humanities and other homework assignments. Math and Science questions should be copied to this area or unambiguously referenced before proceeding with worked solutions. unless there is a designated space in the textbook, workbook or worksheets (in this case, Homework can be done there). All classroom working for Math and Science should be done in the Fleeting Notes section of notebooks.

# What is the format of the notes?

Every type of notes for a particular session should start with the heading in the following format:

CPN or HPN or FN or HP/Topic Title/date in dd/mm/yyyy format

where

- CPN stands for Classroom Permanent Notes
- HPN stands for Homework Permanent Notes
- FN stands for Fleeting Notes
- HP stands for Homework Practice

# What is the format of the notes? II

- For every topic, at least two sheets of paper are used: one for temporary notes, another for permanent notes, 2 pages each. However, some topics may require more pages, especially the Practise work section for Math or Science. Students can quickly add more pages to any section of their notebooks from the Spare Sheets Section.
- Permanent notes always come in the form of a key question/answer/summary stated in your own words. Different parts of permanent notes should be highlighted:
  - Key questions: in green
  - Summaries: in yellow
  - Names, Dates, Formulae and other important facts: in blue



# What is the format of the notes? III

Notes should use both words and relevant diagrams, sketches, graphs, tables etc. Text alone is not effective for memorisation.

- Students may use their own symbols and abbreviations to save space and time.
- Index Cards is one of the most effective tools to memorize facts. Everything that is highlighted in blue on permanent notes in a student's notebook should be transferred to index cards. Physical or app (Quizlet is recommended).
- Permanent notes must cover all the key concepts of the topics as well as all types of questions with worked solutions
- Except for Fleeting Notes, everything written in the notebook should look clear, structured and neat.

# How does the System work and what is the 5 Steps Learning Cycle?

5 Steps Learning Cycle is the core of the System, determining how to take, process and review notes. There are 5 Steps in the Cycle:

1. Temporary notes: in class while listening to the teacher or reading textbooks (using 5 Steps Smart Reading) and other resources at home (fleeting notes) or practising in solving problems for Math/Science or writing essays for English/Humanities the same day after school.
2. Permanent notes: in Math/Science class or the same day at home after completing temporary notes for all the subjects.
3. Reciting: attempting to answer the key questions right after homework is done. The most effective for memorisation is to recite aloud.
4. Reviewing: at the end of each week (ZGP). Index cards should be reviewed daily.
5. Monthly quizzes and working on gaps (ZGP)

# What is Zero Gap Pyramid Cycle?

ZGP is one of the most effective reviewing techniques based on finding gaps and focusing on eliminating them.

ZGP Cycle is the proven most effective technique of reviewing permanent notes by finding and eliminating gaps systematically.

ZGP Cycle implies that you have already prepared all the key questions in your permanent notes fully covering all parts of the syllabus to be tested.

The idea is simple. At the bottom of the pyramid lie all the gaps that you found after the first round of reviewing your Permanently notes or index cards. After you attempted to close the gaps and upon completion of the second round of reviewing the number of gaps will be smaller. And so on until zero.

# What is Zero Gap Pyramid Cycle? II

For all the topics and key questions:

- Read the key question from permanent notes having covered all the relevant summaries and other important information by hand or a sheet of paper
- Answer the question aloud and compare your answer with your notes
- If you forgot the answer or found your answer incomplete, put a tick with a pencil next to the question, review the correct answer (or ask the teacher if you don't understand) and attempt to answer the questions aloud again until you think you remember the correct answer firmly.
- If your attempt is successful, move to the next question.
- After you are done with all the key questions start over again but only with questions with ticks, put one more tick next to the questions you are not confident in and try to memorize (or ask the teacher if you don't understand) the correct answer.

You will have fewer questions you are not confident in during the second round.

- Do the same with three ticks to reduce the number of different questions even further.
- Repeat the Cycle until you don't have any question you are not able to answer.

ZGP is the same for Index cards: instead of ticks just put the cards which you remember firmly aside and cards that you don't remember at the back of the stack.

# What is 5 Steps Smart Reading technique?

Smart Reading strategy comes from the general idea behind the 5 Steps methodology: explore a wide range of concepts at once then go deeper, elaborating and reviewing. This approach proved to save a lot of time of ineffective studying with built-in automatic memorization.

## 1. Skimming for Structure

Explore the table of contents, structure of the book, its volume and each chapter.

## 2. Key Ideas

Find and try to understand the key ideas of each chapter. Normally, they can be found at the beginning/the end of the chapter or in boxes or highlighted in bold. Try to memorize the key terminology (in bold).

## 3. Taking notes

Never read textbooks without taking notes and using index cards. Even with re-reading it proved to be a waste of time in the long run with low rates of knowledge retention. Take temporary notes and then restate the information in our own words in the form of Question/Answer/Summary for each concept.

## 4. Processing notes

While you write down, structure and restate information in your own words your mind is active. It may look time-consuming but overall you save time as you need much less time on reviewing with a high retention rate. Preparation of Permanent notes after taking fleeting notes is the best way of processing information.

## 5. Reviewing Notes (Zero Gaps Pyramid)

Review your Permanent notes weekly and before the exam by trying to answer key questions and using ZGP Cycle to find and eliminate gaps. This is the most time-effective technique producing the highest retention rates.

# What does a typical homework assignment look like?

Normally, homework assignment comprises

1. Preparation Homework Permanent Notes organising Fleeting notes and information from the textbook and other resources and
2. Homework practice corresponding to the topic discussed in class.

# How about stationery?

The school will provide all the stationery needed for all students involved to start the process. Later students are to buy the stationery to refill and restock.

New students and students who lost their pens, notebooks etc. will have to buy the stationery themselves according to the list provided below.

- B5 Notebook with rings for sheets with two standard holes
- Colour labels for subject sections of the notebook
- Folders (fasteners) for each subject
- Blocks of B5 sheets with standard holes
- Pencil case with a ruler, markers/highlighters, eraser, normal and colour pens, lead pencils and colour pencils.

# What to bring to school?

Bring along only one notebook with enough blank sheets of paper for all subjects with colourful labels for each subject and pencil case.



# How to organise notes?

All the notes are to be taken in one notebook under corresponding subject sections. Subject sections in the notebook should be labelled.

At home, after preparation of permanent notes, throw all the Fleeting notes and sort permanent notes by subject folders (using binders or fasteners). Label the folder with subject names. Refill your notebook with new sheets of paper if needed.

# What will happen if a student forgot his notebook or doesn't do his work properly?

There are supporting disciplinary rules and measures in place.

- After explaining to students how the System work we remind and warn
- It's not allowed to listen to the teacher's explanation, working with textbooks or other resources without taking proper notes with pen and paper. Students who deliberately refuse to follow the system will be sent out of the class and parents will be informed accordingly.
- It's not allowed to join classes without students' notebooks of the special format and pencil cases.
- Every case of coming to school without property done homework will be recorded for further discussion with parents if the problem persists.