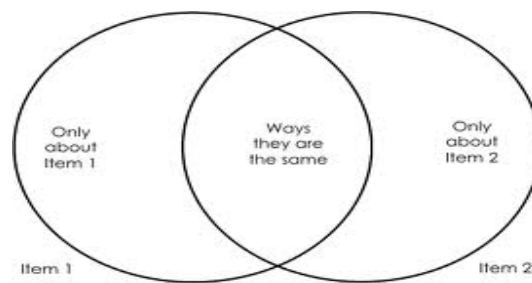
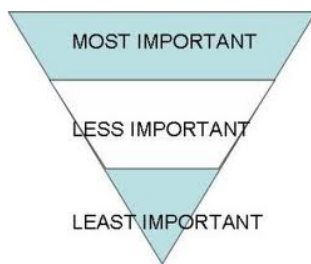


Visual Maps

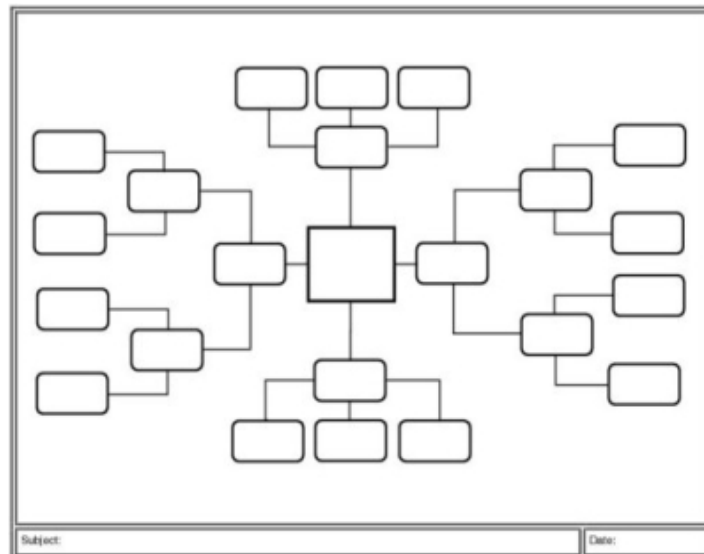
When reading for research, we need to read with a dialogue in mind. We need to be continually asking ourselves if the information we're reading is useful to our central argument or interest.

This isn't easy, and students can often get lost in continuous reading. One way to stay on track is to take breaks every so often to take notes on how the information relates to your area of interest. Not enough time to write all those words?

Use visual representations along the margins instead:



Or, try making a mind map:



And once you have some writing done, or perhaps an initial draft, try a reverse outline (see over).

The reverse outline

If a regular outline is something you do after you draft out your paper, a reverse outline is something you do after you write a draft. A reverse outline can help you make sense of what you've done.

The big picture

Reverse outlines can help you see the big picture, most especially with papers that need major reordering of paragraphs or papers filled with paragraphs that have too many ideas in them and don't hold together.

How to do it?

- Go through the paper and number each paragraph
- On a separate page, record the main point(s) of each paragraph
- Go through the entire paper this way. When you have gone through the entire paper, you will have an outline providing you with an overview of your paper

Then what?

Look carefully at your overview, asking yourself the following questions:

- Are the paragraphs properly focused?
- Does each topic sentence reflect the main idea of each paragraph?
- Do all of your topic sentences create a coherent story?
- When you look at the outline as a whole, does the organization reflect what you promised in your intro/thesis? If not, revise.

Resources

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., Bizup, J., & Fitzgerald, W. T. (2016). *The craft of research* (4th edition). University of Chicago Press (336 pages).