

READING Strategy → Two-Column Notes

Reading component

Comprehension

Related Standard(s) of Learning 3.5, 3.6, 4.4, 4.5, 5.5, 5.6

Overview of the strategy

Two-column notes help students think critically about text. There are several variations.

Strategy procedure

1. Ask students to divide their papers into two columns.
2. They should label the left column *Main Idea* and the right column *Details*.
3. As students take notes, they should write the main idea on the left and the details of that main idea to the immediate right of the main idea.
4. As a new subtopic is discussed, students should add new main ideas and place those details next to that main idea.

Main Idea	Details
How are islands formed?	a. volcanic islands — lava-layers flow into sea and pile up volcanic islands (Hawaii) b. mountain tops — tops of mountains in ocean (off coasts of Maine & Scotland) c. barrier islands — sand pushed up by waves (off Florida & New Jersey) round, oval, horseshoe
Atoll	a. volcano forms a volcanic island b. coral reef forms around it c. volcano sinks leaving reef
How are atolls formed?	d. pieces of coral are pounded by waves into sand — builds up into an island on top of the reef — called atoll

Carol M. Santa, Lynn T. Havens, and Evelyn Maycumber, *Creating Independence through Student-Owned Strategies* (Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1996).

Variations

1. *Opinion-Proof*. The left column should be labeled *Opinion* and the right column *Proof*. Students write an opinion about the topic of study, character, or plot of a story and look for proof of their opinion in the text. They write their proof next to the opinion that it supports. This can be used with both narrative and expository text.

Opinion	Proof
Students should be allowed to eat lunch off campus.	1. support local business 2. give students a break from school — come back feeling recharged 3. teach students more responsibility
Students should not be allowed to eat lunch off campus.	1. school cafeteria will lose money 2. cause problems for neighbors near school 3. late to afternoon classes

Santa, Dailey, Nelson, 1985.

2. Question-Answer. Label the left column Question and the right column Answer(s). Write four questions in the left column to help identify and study the problem. Read in the text to find the answer(s) to the questions and write each answer in the Answer(s) column.

Question	Answer(s)
What is the Problem or Issue?	America's topsoil is eroding away at an alarming rate.
What are the Effects?	ugly ditches cut through the hillside creek bed choked with topsoil soil can't produce as many products
What are the Causes?	not properly protecting soil — poor conservation not rotating crops
What are the Solutions?	no-till new fertilizers strip farming

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