



# Notecard Question & Answer Technique

To succeed in college, important ideas from lectures and textbooks must be *identified, organized, recorded, practiced, and stored in long term memory* for recall when needed. **The Notecard Question and Answer Technique (NQAT)** helps students do these important tasks required for learning. Using **NQAT**, many students have uncovered a previously hidden ability to learn and remember better than ever before and earn higher grades. The benefits of using NQAT include **developing an easy way** to gather and organize information to be learned, **saving time** because it speeds up learning and **performing better** on exams resulting in **better grades**.

## SETTING UP NOTECARDS

- 1) Purchase notecards for recording main ideas and details. The size may be 3 x 5, 4 x 6, or 5 x 8 inches depending on the amount of material to be recorded, handwriting size, and if you want to include memory boosters such as drawings, pictures, diagrams, charts, or tables.
- 2) Turn main points from lectures and textbooks into questions. Place a question on one side of a notecard and its answer on the other. With math or science problems, put a problem on one side and the solution, step-by-step, on the other.
- 3) Place only one question and its answer on a notecard. This makes it easier to organize and reorganize the ideas into meaningful groups, categories, or sequences, if needed.
- 4) Avoid complete sentences or spelling out every word. Use short phrases for sentences and symbols and abbreviations for words. This results in greater condensation of ideas which leads to less review time and less total substance to recall.
- 5) Indicate where the information on each notecard is from by jotting down *page numbers* (if from the text) or *dates* (if from lecture). This permits quick reference should there be confusion or uncertainty.
- 6) Keep notecards separate for each course using rubber bands or different colored cards. Use rubber bands to keep the "learned" cards separate from the "yet to be learned" cards in each subject.
- 7) When making questions for notecards, use the clues to main ideas and important details that authors and lecturers provide.

### Question on front

Class 10/30/2003

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5 Kingdoms of living things?

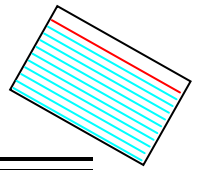
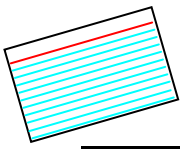
### Answer on back

1. Plantae ex. - ferns, mosses

2. Animalia ex. - humans, birds

3. Protista ex. - diatoms, paramecia

4. Monera ex. - bacteria, algae



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## REVIEWING AND RECITING NOTECARDS

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**Reciting questions and answers** promotes faster learning and more accurate recall and reveals what has and has not been learned before an exam is taken – when something can still be done about it. The more often notecards are recited, the more likely it is for information to move from short term memory toward long term memory.

- Step 1.** Read a question aloud or look at a problem from the notecard.
- Step 2.** Then without looking, recite an answer aloud as if lecturing a class. Those who have discovered that writing answers enhances learning and recall are encouraged to do so. If you have problems and solutions on notecards, write out a solution on scrap paper from memory.
- Step 3.** Turn the notecard over and check for completeness and accuracy of your answer or solution.
- Step 4.** If your answer is complete and accurate, place the notecard in the “I know this” pile and move on to the next notecard.
- Step 5.** If your answer is not recalled or is recalled incorrectly, look at it and read it over, reread the question and write or recite aloud as much of the answer as possible from memory. Do this step as many times as needed until the answer is recited or written correctly from memory. Then, place this notecard in the “I don’t know this, yet” pile and go to the next notecard.
- Step 6.** Review the “I don’t know this pile” once every two to three days to promote learning. Review the “I know this” one or two times per week to check for and prevent forgetting.

As the number of times that you review and recite notecards increases, more and more of the cards will transfer to the “I know this” pile and you will see progress in learning. You are also discovering what you have learned and what you have not yet learned **before a test**, when you can still do something about it.

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## TAKING A POST-TEST SURVEY

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After your test is returned to you, reviewing it and investigating the source of errors in the learning process will lead to remedies, and mistakes in notetaking or recitation that lead to lower grades will not be repeated. There are three things to check:

- 1) If information for correct answers ***is not*** on notecards but appears in the text or was given in lecture, this suggests that more attention is needed to spot the indicators of main points in lectures and textbooks and record them.
- 2) If information for correct answers ***is*** on notecards but missed on the exam, this suggests that a greater number of recitations and reviews are needed, a distractive study environment needs changing, or there may be personal concerns that need resolution before more effective learning can take place.
- 3) Any ***incorrect information on notecards should be corrected*** immediately. Missing information should be added to notecards and learned in preparation for subsequent exams and for more knowledge. This is especially valuable if there is a comprehensive final exam scheduled.