

However, some of the ideas could prove useful. If possible, take time after competitions to write up your notes into short summaries so that you'll still be able to understand them when you refer back in a month or a year's time.

Conclusion

Your notes are for you—a sense of what works and what doesn't will come with practice. Nobody is going to mark them, so there is no right or wrong approach. Your main goal should always be practicality, both in terms of writing down what you need and using it afterward.

Effective note-taking will help you improve not only the content and structure of your speech but also your listening and critical skills. The physical process of writing an idea down helps us not only remember but also analyze it. And, most useful for a debater, recording a series of notes on related points stimulates the brain to seek out points of connection that would not be apparent simply by listening. Notes are the point at which we interact physically with the world of ideas; they represent not only a functional role in terms of recording our thoughts and those of others but also a developmental stage in the thinking process itself.

EXERCISES

- A. Look over the notes you produced for the exercises in the last chapter and determine how you would change them in light of the hints in this chapter?
- B. Flow a discussion on a news or current affairs program. See if you can follow individual arguments as they pass between speakers.
- C. Look at the list of abbreviations given earlier in this chapter, then develop your own note-taking shorthand for the following terms:

1st Amendment

attainment

creativity

discipline

education

educators

examinations

freedom of speech