

## Making Two-Column Notes

Two-column notes can be used to learn and review definitions of vocabulary terms, examples of multiple-step processes, or details of specific concepts. The two-column-note strategy is simple: write the term, main idea, step-by-step process, or concept in the left-hand column, and the definition, example, or detail on the right.

One strategy for using two-column notes is to organize main ideas and their details. The main ideas from your reading are written in the left-hand column of your paper and can be written as questions, key words, or a combination of both. Details describing these main ideas are then written in the right-hand column of your paper.

**1. Identify the main ideas.** The main ideas for a chapter are listed in the section objectives. However, you decide which ideas to include in your notes. For example, the table below shows some main ideas from the objectives in Chapter 5, Section 2.

- Describe the locations in the periodic table and the general properties of the alkali metals,

alkaline-earth metals, the halogens, and the noble gases.

**2. Divide a blank sheet of paper into two columns and write the main ideas in the left-hand column.** Summarize your ideas using quick phrases that are easy for you to understand and remember. Decide how many details you need for each main idea, and write that number in parentheses under the main idea.

**3. Write the detail notes in the right-hand column.** Be sure you list as many details as you designated in the main-idea column. The table below shows some details that correspond to the main ideas in Chapter 5, Section 2.

The two-column method of review is perfect whether you use it to study for a short quiz or for a test on the material in an entire chapter. Just cover the information in the right-hand column with a sheet of paper, and after reciting what you know, uncover the notes to check your answers. Then ask yourself what else you know about that topic. Linking ideas in this way will help you to gain a more complete picture of chemistry.

Main Idea	Detail Notes
• Alkali metals (4 details)	• Group 1 • highly reactive • $ns^1$ electron configuration • soft, silvery
• Alkaline-earth metals (4 details)	• Group 2 • reactive • $ns^2$ electron configuration • harder than alkali metals
• Halogens (3 details)	• Group 17 • reactive • nonmetallic
• Noble gases (3 details)	• Group 18 • low reactivity • stable $ns^2np^6$ configuration