

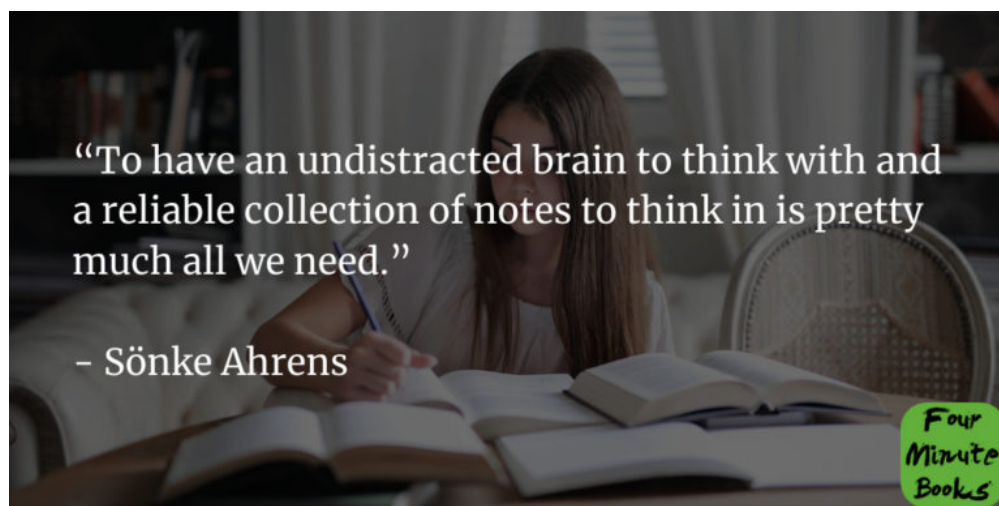
How to Take Smart Notes Summary

 fourminutebooks.com

1-Sentence-Summary: *How to Take Smart Notes* is the perfect guide on how to improve your writing, reading, and learning techniques using simple yet little-known tips-and-tricks that you can implement right away to develop these skills.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



We've all encountered situations where our brain just freezes at the worst possible time. We find ourselves staring blankly at the wall, not knowing where to start. It can happen during an exam, when writing a project that's close to a deadline, or it can be at work.

Smart notes can lead to great achievements. Whether we're talking about writing, learning, or improving memory skills, taking notes can help you accumulate more knowledge and retain more in a shorter time frame.

Moreover, they can help us be more productive. Oftentimes we feel overwhelmed with the multitude of tasks we encounter at school or work. The book talks about this particular issue and how to overcome it to become our most productive selves.

Use *How to Take Smart Notes* as a tool in your future academic and professional endeavors. If you do it correctly, you will utilize your memory's full capacity and enhance your retention ability while adding value to all your deliverables and, most importantly, to yourself.

Here are the three most valuable lessons from this book:

1. There are three types of notes you should always take.
2. Create a slip-box to store your notes and use them when you lack ideas.

3. Productivity is the result of small and systematic steps.

Lesson 1: Always take three types of notes when learning, reading, and creating ideas.

Now that we acknowledged the importance of taking notes, it's time to dive a little bit deeper into this subject. Let's take the example of Luhmann, a sociology professor at University of Bielefeld, author of nearly 60 books and hundreds of articles.

The first type of notes he took were *fleeting notes*. These don't go into a slip-box, as they're used to uncover ideas and thoughts. Instead, it's better to take them in a notebook or a piece of paper to which you can later come back.

Then, there are *literature notes*. As the name suggests, these are memos of the things you read, the reference details, all summed up in your own words so that once you come back to them, you understand what they mean to you.

Thirdly, we've got *permanent notes*. These come from your fleeting and literature notes. **Use them to create new ideas, back them up using arguments, create a space for thinking, debating, and discovering multiple perspectives.** These notes foster a creative thinking process.

After making permanent notes, store them in a safe place, and throw away your fleeting ones. Create a system to store your notes by importance and priority. Keywords pins or a digital system can help you store them accurately and flexibly.

Lesson 2: Create a hard version of your memory by designing a slip-box to store all your ideas and thoughts.

By now, you should be accustomed to the term *slip-box*. It's a storage box used to keep all your valuable notes in an organized way. The author suggests that we keep two of these boxes nearby, each corresponding to a different purpose.

The first slip-box should be for collecting references and book content and the notes that go with them. The second box is for storing notes on ideas and thoughts. This is considered to be the main box and the most valuable one.

But how do these slip-boxes really help? For example, let's go back to the situation where you can't seem to get the hang of a paper you have to write. **Having ready-to-go arguments, quotes, and ideas written down will help you break the ice and create a great piece.**

However, you need to take the time to prepare these slip-boxes and gather valuable information. Then, just use that knowledge base to kick start your research. Order your information properly and organize it by relevance, topics, age, and other criteria.

Lesson 3: Dividing overwhelming tasks into smaller chunks can help increase productivity and execution.

According to the book, over half of all doctoral theses remain unfinished. But why is that? People often feel overwhelmed with such tasks and the amount of work they imply, so they give up on the way. This is more of a psychological issue, as people tend to be intimidated by large amounts of work.

But you don't have to fall into the same psychological trap! Ahrens states that if you divide a piece of work into smaller chunks, you are more likely to execute it and save time! Plus, with all those notes saved in your slip-boxes, it should be even much easier to do so.

If you have a paper to research and write, commit to writing one page per day, for example. You are the one that has to set the right parameters for you. Then, make sure to accomplish them every time and be consistent.

Writing down helps you externalize your thoughts. When you take notes, you give your mind a visual image of its idea. This leaves room for more perspectives and improvement. Plus, it helps to be more critical and objective to yourself, according to psychologist Daniel Kahneman.

How to Take Smart Notes Review

How to Take Smart Notes is a valuable, reliable source of lessons on thinking processes and how to improve them. It offers a complex yet easy-to-read guide on taking notes in a smart and organized way. Using real-life examples, the book managed to give fact-based insights that speak to its readers personally.

Who would I recommend the How to Take Smart Notes summary to?

The students who struggle with writing their papers and theses, the psychology enthusiast who wants to gain insights on learning processes, or the person looking to improve their retention levels and become a faster learner.