Two-Column Notes

General Description:

Two-column notes provide a flexible, efficient way to support note taking while they develop the skills necessary to become independent note takers. It provides a way to hold students accountable for their learning while providing enough support to keep the task focused and manageable.

Directions:

1. Students divide notebook paper in half lengthwise.

2. Label the first column "Note taking" and the second column "Note making." In the note taking column, students record facts or ideas from a passage they read, a lecture, a video, observations from a learning experience, etc. In the note making column, they respond to the fact or idea by making a connection, sharing an insight, or asking a question.

Note taking	Note making
• fact or idea	• my response to the fact or idea
• fact or idea	• my response to the fact or idea

Modifications and Extensions:

• Other heading options for two-column notes include:
  ❑ Questions (generated by students or teacher prior to reading)/Answers
  ❑ What's interesting/What's important
  ❑ Topic or main idea/Details
  ❑ Direct quote/Personal response to the quote
  ❑ Prediction or opinion/Proof or evidence

• Students often have difficulty distinguishing between what's important and what's just background information or interesting. For complex texts or complex concepts, provide the specific categories for note taking. This helps students determine what's important.

Example:

For a selection on historic civil rights decisions, the teacher might provide the following categories to structure students' note taking. As the student reads, they know to think whether or not the information relates to one of these categories and how. Information throughout the selection is filtered through these categories, helping students see relationships and make connections.

(Teacher-Generated)	Note taking	Note making
Fourteenth Amendment	• fact or idea • fact or idea	• my response • my response
Plessy v Ferguson		
Brown v. BOE		
Now (today)		