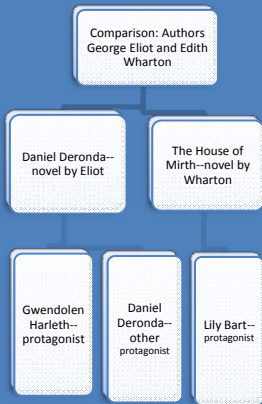




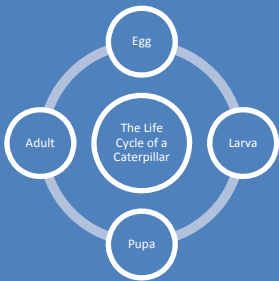
Visually enhance notes: draw maps and charts before, during, and after class.

Adapt these examples in any way that works for you!

Concept Map:



Life-Cycle Diagram:



Comparison Chart:

	Who governs?	Belief in equality?
Democracy	People help govern	All people are equal
Totalitarianism	State governs	Tendency toward elitism

Critical Note-Taking

How to learn and remember essential ideas

Why do we take notes?

Memory after only listening in a class is less effective than the memory and knowledge that results when one takes organized notes and purposefully studies a topic. Reflecting and thinking critically on your notes over time, and adding to them, helps you to create true knowledge!

Step 1: Prepare to take good notes before class

- Read relevant sections of texts and/or do learning activities such as problem sets and review questions.
- Review notes from previous classes and think about ways that the notes connect to the current topic and your prior learning.

Why prepare? Preparation allows you to:

- Identify important points during class. Because you will have built a knowledge foundation in your brain, you will know what to listen for and you'll pay better attention to lecture facts or discussion ideas that connect to material you already reviewed.
- Discover how to organize your new knowledge. For example, if you have a key theme or term in mind from previous notes or readings—such as “totalitarianism and elitism”—you'll be able to group relevant ideas or details you hear in class under that theme.
- Know what you don't understand so that you can ask questions and record answers in class.

In addition,

- Spending time over several days with class material allows you to secure the information in long-term memory. The brain learns best this way—you even process information while you sleep.

Step 2: Take purposeful notes during class

- Think of yourself as an interpreter and creator, not simply as a recorder or stenographer, in order to truly capture and understand your course material.
- Date your notes and keep them organized. Create a heading/title for the top of each class' notes—one that sums up the key topics that will be covered.
- Pay attention to what is important. What is most important?
 - Anything that illustrates your reading.
 - Anything that the professor emphasizes, writes on the board, or repeats from the textbook or previous classes.
 - Key terms and definitions.
- Create organization in your notes that is meaningful to you as you record important terms and concepts. Draw maps or diagrams to show the relationships among ideas. Develop your own note-taking system, with strategies that work for you (see the left column of this handout).

S U M M A R Y	Main Notes Column
	Paragraph Summary

Main Notes Area:

Take notes here during class.

Summary/**Cue Column:**

Write questions, main ideas or connections between topics.

Paragraph Summary**Area:**

Condense notes in your own words in 1-2 sentences.

References:

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Critical Note-Taking

How to learn and remember essential ideas

- Think about connections between what you learn in class, in the reading, and what you already know. Have you read any news that relates to your Globalization class? Do any recent films remind you of the classics from your Film course? Jot down ideas you have so you can think about them more later.

Why do these activities work? Your brain's nerve cells (neurons) grow connections and exchange more information and ideas, increasing your brainpower!

Step 3: Review and reflect on notes after class

- Take 5 to 10 minutes right after class to look through notes, clarify any unclear points and fill in abbreviations; expand brief notes, and summarize subsections of what you are learning. Don't wait too long, or you'll forget valuable insights. The physical act of writing will help you to remember, as well!
- Review again the main points of the notes within 24 hours; imagine connections to readings or previous knowledge. Just like reviewing notes and readings over several days *before* class, doing several reviews *after* class helps to consolidate the information, or transfer it from short-term to long-term memory.
- Make review interesting:
 - Create new ways to re-experience the information, e.g. re-write your notes, connect them with previous weeks' work, or integrate class notes with reading notes into one source.
 - Find ways to compare and contrast what you've learned.
 - Use some of the methods illustrated in the left column of this handout; also consider color coding different themes and units of information.
- Review **all** of your notes one day a week. You'll build stronger neuron networks, helping you to connect different parts of your learning!

Step 4: Test understanding

- Test yourself using the questions at the end of the book.
- Create your own questions to test your knowledge (for example, in the cue column of your notes).
- Partner with someone—a friend, a tutor, a classmate—to test understanding.

Why test yourself? These processes help you to solidify your learning and prepare for tests. You will feel you have mastered the material.