

Let's Write: Take Notes & Write Arguments

Sometimes, you don't need to take notes in a graphic organizer. You just need to take notes as you read. It's most helpful to take notes while you read, not after you finish. Teachers sometimes call taking notes "annotating" because you are adding small notes directly to the text. These small notes should help you remember what you read.

You can take notes in many ways.

- a) You can underline words in the passage.
- b) You can write words in the margins (the sides of the page).
- c) You can circle important terms the first time you read them.

Any time you think "I should remember that," or "I might forget that and it's important," take a note. If you take a few seconds to underline or write a word, it may save you the minutes it would take to reread the whole text or chapter. Note-taking saves you time.

As you get older, note-taking will be more and more important. Texts get more complicated and the ideas more complex. You can practice now even if texts feel easy. It's a skill you will use in future grades and when you go to work.

In this sentence, the main ideas are introducing naval architects and knowing that they build ships. So, the notes could look like:

Naval architects build ships.

This next sentence gives examples of the ships that naval architects build. If you think you may forget these examples, then you can underline them:

They build boats, submarines, and other ships.

The next sentences define the parts of "naval architect." We can underline them:

Naval means on the water. Architects build things. Naval architects build things on the water.

Then, sentences explain more about what naval architects do.

Each boat can do many jobs. Naval architects make them special for their jobs. They make sure these boats are safe.

The last sentence is a conclusion sentence, so it does not have any new facts. There is no need to underline anything here:

Naval architects do a very important job.

Here is the paragraph with notes altogether:

Naval architects build ships. They build boats, submarines, and other ships. Naval means on the water. Architects build things. Naval architects build things on the water. Each boat can do many jobs. Naval architects make them special for their jobs. They make sure these boats are safe. Naval architects do a very important job.

The next paragraph shares that naval architects “study ideas about boats”. They learn how to make boats “stable”. They make sure the “boat will not roll” to be safe. Naval architects use “careful planning” and “put weight in the bottom” of boats. Underline these quotes in Paragraph #2 below to take the needed notes.

Naval architects study ideas about boats. These ideas keep the boats safe. Making a boat stable is a big deal. Stable means the boat will not roll over easily. Stable boats are safe for sailors. It takes careful planning to make a boat stable. Naval architects put weight in the bottom of the ship. Their work keeps the ship stable.

Paragraph #3 describes how naval architects use “science” and “computers” to design boats. Underline the quotes and 3-5 other key details.

These architects use science to know how their boats will float. They design the boats on computers. The computers show how water will float the boat. They can plan how boats will work for many years. Computers also make sure each part of the ship works together. This means the electricity, plumbing, and motors all work well together. Naval architects work with people in other jobs to make sure all of those parts are working.

Paragraph #4 describes one more big idea about naval architects. Underline 3-5 key words or phrases to remind you of this important job.

When boats are built, naval architects still help. They solve problems as ships get made. They check to make sure the boats work as they planned. They study ways to make the boats do their jobs better. Some naval architects study ships in the water. They write about what they see. They share what they see with other naval architects. This way ships become safer and better each year.

The conclusion paragraph summarizes the information we already underlined, so the fifth paragraph does not need any notes. We can use our earlier notes to understand the information.

The notes show us that:

- Naval architects build ships boats submarines naval on the water
architects build make things safe
- study ideas about boats stable boat will not roll careful planning put
weight in the bottom
- science computers float each part works together people in other jobs
- solve problems work as they planned do their jobs better share what
they see safer and better

We can use these facts to write an argument. An argument takes careful writing, because you need to clearly write a claim and then defend it with facts that support your claim. This writing requires the argument to make sense and argue for the claim well.

Writing a Claim

Sometimes you know your claim immediately. Usually, though it takes some edits. If we want to say naval architects are cool, we may start writing:

Naval architects are cool.

But, we use different language in class, so we could write:

Naval architects are very interesting.

This claim would require that we describe what makes it interesting. But, maybe the claim is more personal.

I think naval architects do the most interesting job.

That claim requires comparing naval architects to all jobs ever worked, so we could make the claim easier to defend by writing:

I think naval architects do the most interesting job in the U.S. Navy.

The claim should be something that you can support with facts, and it should be clearly stated so the persuasive text is easier to write.

Being Persuasive

Persuasive means convincing, like when you try to convince other people that you are right. Being clear and precise in your writing is a great way to be persuasive. If we want to support the claim "I think naval architects do the most interesting job in the U.S. Navy", then we need some persuasive facts.

These facts from each paragraph show how interesting naval architects are:

1. build ships make things safe
2. study ideas about boats stable put weight in bottom
3. science computers people in other jobs
4. solve problems share what they see safer and better

The first supporting sentence could be:

Naval architects work to build ships and make them safe.

This sentence rewords the notes we took from paragraph #1.

1. Write a sentence that expresses the details in paragraph #2 and shows that naval architects are interesting.

2. Write two sentences that express the details in paragraphs #3 and #4.

3. Write a persuasive paragraph about naval architects. Your paragraph should start with a claim about naval architects, then have at least four sentences of supporting details. End your paragraph with a conclusion sentence.

Be sure to check your paragraph for good, complete sentences!