



**FACING  
HISTORY &  
OURSSELVES**

**CLASSROOM VIDEO • VIEWING GUIDE**

# TEACHING STRATEGY: TWO-COLUMN NOTE-TAKING

## Overview

In this classroom video, social studies teacher Paul Capobianco uses the Two-Column Note-Taking teaching strategy with his students in order to organize their thoughts and emotional responses as they listen to recorded survivor testimony. Two-column note-taking involves drawing a vertical line down

the middle of a piece of paper, dividing the notes that students will take into two discrete categories. The strategy allows students to jot down the major ideas they hear as they watch a video or a speaker, and it gives literal space for students to process their emotional responses to challenging material.

## Questions to Consider

1. At **0:23**, Mr. Capobianco says, “In 8th grade, I’m spending a lot of time with our students getting better at taking notes, because I want them to have a soft landing in high school.” What do you think he means? Why is this important?
  2. At **1:37**, Mr. Capobianco says, “Everyone’s experience is different. . . . What’s your neighbor’s note-taking like? What’s your peer’s like? It’s not a secret. I’m not evaluating their note-taking per se right here, just one person alone. I want them to work together.” What are the advantages of collaborative note-taking? What are the potential drawbacks?
  3. At **5:13**, Mr. Capobianco reflects, “I love that [the students] wanted to follow the instructions of how to take notes, but I did not want them to lose the experience of taking in the testimony.” How do you strike that balance between effective note-taking and absorbing complex material with your students as they hone their note-taking skills?
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## Featured

### Paul Capobianco

Teacher

8th Grade

Atrium School

Watertown, MA

## Video Goals

- **Learn** how the Two-Column Note-Taking teaching strategy can help students process emotionally challenging material.
- **Observe** the teacher giving guidance to students as they learn note-taking skills.

## Lesson Resources

- [Teaching Strategy: Two-Column Note-Taking](#)
- [Remembering the Past: Sonia Weitz’s History](#) (video)
- [Life or Death in the Netherlands](#) (video)
- [Holocaust and Human Behavior, Chapter 11](#)