

Tips for Preparing and Using Notecards

Preparing Note Cards

- Use 3x5 white notecards and write on only one side of the cards.
- Use visual cues to help divide up information. If your speech has been outlined, use those indicators to set up the organization of your cards
- Use fewer words. Just write enough to jog your memory
- Divide information onto separate notecards in a way that makes sense to you. You may want to start a new card for each main point, or put a direct quote on its own card so it stands out to you.
- Include cues (for example: “point to slide” or “pause”); write these in a different color or highlight them so you recognize that they are not part of your actual speech.
- Number your cards.
- Use these cards in practice so you are used to the feel and flow. If something isn’t working (e.g., you don’t understand what you wrote), you can still fix it.
- Consider marking approximate time points on the cards so you can pace yourself during the speech (e.g., when you get to Card 3, you should be at about halfway through your speech time. If you are past that, you will need to shorten some of your content).

Handling Note Cards

- Practice! You should get comfortable using the cards.
- Before you stand up to speak, make sure your note cards are in order.
- Try not to fidget with the cards. You may find it helpful to only hold them in one hand at a time to resist bending or flipping them.
- If you have a lectern or podium, you can rest the cards on the surface.