Eighth Grade Term Paper: Notetaking

I. **Why should you use notecards in the first place?**

Every term paper topic will contain multiple subtopics. For example, a paper on the 1969 moon landing would discuss earlier space travel, reasons why people wanted to go to the moon, competition with the Soviet Union, failed attempts, etc. You would encounter the same subtopic – e.g., reasons for going to the moon – in several different sources. If you just wrote notes on paper, you would have difficulty combining all of the information on a particular subtopic.   You would have to keep flipping back and forth between pages, and it would be hard to cut and reshuffle information. But with notecards, you can sort your information easily by subtopic, and move information without any trouble.

II. Steps for notetaking
1. Buy lined index cards, preferably 3x5 or 4x6. 5x7 is too big. You can have different color notecards if you would like.
2. Buy a box in which to keep these index cards.
3. When you find a source that you intend to use, make a BIBLIOGRAPHY CARD for that source will all the necessary information – title, author(s)/editor(s), publisher, city of publication, date of publication. If you are using a website, write down the exact URL and the date of download.
4. Give each source a LETTER CODE (e.g., "A"). Write this letter on the bibliography card.
5. Each regular notecard **MUST** contain the following information:
    a. CODE of the source or author abbreviation
    b. PAGE NUMBER(S)!!!!
    c. Quotation marks for any direct quotation
    d. The appropriate subtopic (e.g., "reasons for going to the moon")
6. You should have ONE main idea per notecard.
7. Do not write on the back of a notecard (unless you are just finishing a sentence or a quotation).

You will probably make some mistakes along the way, but this is an important skill to learn. Notecards will make the process of organizing your ideas much easier.

(Sample Notecard)

Source Code/Author name
Subtopic
(Page #) "Direct quotation of information" w/name of speaker
(Page #) paraphrased information, dates, statistics,