Understanding Four-Box Note Taking

A simple visual structure for capturing information without writing everything down.

Four-box notes divide a page into four purposeful areas. You can capture key points, questions, actions and follow-up details in whichever order works for you.

Example: planning a team meeting

KEY INFORMATION

Meeting moves to Thursday at 10am.
Project update is the main topic.

QUESTIONS

Who will share the agenda?
Is remote attendance possible?

ACTIONS

Send progress summary.
Check outstanding tasks.

FOLLOW-UP

Add the new date to calendar.
Review notes on Wednesday.

A flexible method

Your boxes do not need to be equally full. Use short phrases, symbols or keywords. Leave a section empty if it is not useful today.

Creating My Four-Box Layout

Choose headings that match how you think and what you need to remember.

Possible headings: important information, ideas, questions, decisions, actions, reminders, support needed and things to revisit.

My situation or topic

Where would I like to use this layout?

Write your own heading in each box, then try adding a few notes.

BOX 1: MY HEADING

BOX 2: MY HEADING

BOX 3: MY HEADING

BOX 4: MY HEADING

A helpful reminder

You can rename the boxes at any time. The aim is to make information easier to find, not to follow a perfect system.

Four-Box Notes for Meetings

A ready-to-use page for discussions, decisions and follow-up tasks.

Meeting details

Date: _____ Topic / people: _____

DISCUSSION POINTS

QUESTIONS TO ASK

DECISIONS MADE

ACTIONS & WHO WILL DO THEM

After the meeting

Circle one priority action. Transfer any time-sensitive tasks to your calendar or reminder system.

Four-Box Notes for Appointments

Prepare for a conversation and keep the important details in one place.

Appointment details

Date: _____ Appointment / person: _____

WHAT I WANT TO DISCUSS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

QUESTIONS I HAVE

NEXT STEPS & FOLLOW-UP

It is okay to ask

You can ask someone to repeat, explain or write down information. You can also bring a supporter if appropriate.

Reviewing and Organising My Notes

A short review can turn notes into useful next steps.

1 REVIEW

Read through your boxes and highlight the points that matter most.

2 IDENTIFY

Choose actions, unanswered questions and anything time-sensitive.

3 TRANSFER

Move tasks and dates into a reminder, calendar or action list.

4 STORE

Keep the notes somewhere you can find them again.

My most important next action

A question to follow up

Where I will keep these notes

My Reusable Four-Box Template

Print or reuse this blank layout for meetings, appointments, learning or everyday planning.

Topic and date

Topic: _____ Date: _____

HEADING: _____

HEADING: _____

HEADING: _____

HEADING: _____

Use only the sections you need. Change the headings to suit your situation.