**Guide to Notetaking: Obtaining, Evaluating, and**

**Communicating Scientific Information**

**Step 1: Capturing the “gist” of the reading**. The gist of a reading is the main idea that the author is writing about. Before you read a document word for word, first take the time to read the title of the article, and then skim the article by reading the first sentence of each paragraph. Once you finish skimming, write down in a single sentence what you think that the gist of the reading is (what is the major point that the author is trying to make?).

The gist of my article is…

**Step 2: Identifying important information in the reading**. After you identify the gist of the article, it is time to read the document from start to finish. As you read, take the time to notice words that you don’t know, and write them down so that you can look them up. In addition, jot down important pieces of information from the reading, things like major points that the author states.

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| **New Vocabulary and Definitions** | **Important Information** |
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**Step 3: Identifying the big idea; why does the reading matter**? After you take notes on the key information, read over your notes and then think about the “big idea” that the document is targeting. What is the main idea that you are supposed to learn from the reading? How does it connect with other information that we’ve learned in class? How might it impact your life in the future? In one or two sentences, summarize the big idea(s) from the reading.