

BREAKING DOWN SENTENCES

When you take notes, you want to write as few words as possible that tell the important ideas and information. One way to do this is *breaking down* the sentences in your reading into a few key words.

Look at the sentence below:

In 1977 *Star Wars*, a movie that was directed by George Lucas, who had graduated from a California film school only a few years earlier, began to play in theaters all over the country with great success.

Now, look at an example of the notes from this sentence:

1977 — *Star Wars* — great success — by George Lucas.

When you break down a sentence, try to write as few words as you can. But be sure to keep the important ideas and information.

EXERCISE I

Directions: Read the sentences below. *Break down* each into as few words as possible that tell the important ideas and information.

1. The stories of Greek myths make good reading, for the gods and goddesses are dramatically filled with human emotion: love, hate, and jealousy.

2. Energy that was created from wind power could save the states of the windy north from their need to burn fuel.

3. The apple, the delicious fruit of the Garden of Eden, is an important fall harvest for the state of New York.

4. In the late eighteen forties many people made a mad dash to California hoping to get rich through the discovery of gold.

5. The fair-haired, tall, and hard fighting sailor of Scandinavia was known as the Viking.

Breaking Down Sentences continues....

1. For most of the eight century, the city of Nara was Japan's imperial capital.

2. Under Shotoku and later rulers, Japan took an active interest in Korean and Chinese culture.

3. Many cultural ideas traveled to Japan by way of the Korean Peninsula.

4. In 1405, Zheng He set off with a fleet of more than 300 ships.

5. The Ming and its scholar-officials wanted a strongly unified state based on a single ruler and traditional values.

6. Marco Polo first traveled to China as a teenager with his father and uncle, who were merchants from Venice.

7. After three and a half years and over 5,000 miles, the Polos reached the court of Kublai Khan.

8. In the tenth century, the Chinese made the first weapon that used gunpowder; the flamethrower.

9. The invention of paper made another key development possible---printing.

10. The Chinese developed the first compass as early as the third century B.C.E.
