Column notes is a literacy support tool that helps students take notes while they analyze and synthesize information from one or more sources. Depending on the purpose for using column notes, students divide their papers into columns. For example, students would divide their papers into two columns for the following purposes: Main Idea-Detail Notes–Students identify key concepts in the left column and the supporting details for each main idea in the right column. Opinion-Proof Notes–Students isolate statements of opinion, bias, or limited point of view in the left column and explain the statements in the right column. Hypothesis-Proof Notes–Students identify predictions or theories in the left column and evaluate the evidence offered for each proof in the right column. Problem-Solution Notes–Students write the nature, causes, and effects of a problem in the left column and potential solutions in the right column. Process Notes–Students describe a process in the left column and then outline the specific steps in the process in the right column. If students were synthesizing information from multiple sources, they would divide their paper in the necessary amount of columns. In the first column, students would write the main idea. In the second column, students would write the supporting details from one of the texts. In the third column, students would write the supporting details from another text and so on. Students could add a final column to synthesize their own opinions, observations, thoughts, and experiences regarding the topic.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Problem | Solution |
|  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Main Idea | Source 1 | Source 2 | Conclusions |
|  |  |  |  |