

# SMARTNOTES

## Table of Contents

### 0 Introduction

#### 0.1 Overview

#### 0.2 What you can expect

### 1 Setting up the System

#### 1.1 Installing Obsidian

#### 1.2 The Basics of Obsidian

##### 1.2.1 Files & Folders

##### 1.2.2 Markdown syntax

##### 1.2.3 Themes and appearance

##### 1.2.4 Core and community plug-ins

##### 1.2.5 Links

##### 1.2.6 Tags

##### 1.2.7 Metadata

##### 1.2.8 Aliases

##### 1.2.9 Graph view

#### 1.3 The basics of the Zettelkasten

##### 1.3.1 First principle: Building a critical mass

##### 1.3.2 Second principle: Thinking in writing

##### 1.3.3 Third principle: Everything should be geared towards some kind of output

##### 1.3.4 One vault vs. multiple vaults

##### 1.3.5 One vault - multiple folders

#### 1.4 Preparing the starting page

##### 1.4.1 Creating the starting page in Obsidian

1.4.2 Writing the first notes linked from the starting page

1.4.3 The structure of the Zettelkasten

1.4.4 Note-titles

1.5 Setting up the reference manager

1.5.1 Keeping track of references without an external reference manager

1.5.2 Installing Zotero and the necessary add-ons

1.5.3 Adding a reference to Zotero together with a PDF

1.5.4 Turning annotations into a note

1.5.5 Adding a reference from Zotero to Obsidian

2 Creating Notes and Networks

2.1. Permanent notes

2.1.1. Permanent notes are works in progress.

2.1.2 Permanent note titles

2.1.3 Permanent note size

2.1.4 Writing with context in mind

2.1.5 Paragraphs as notes and notes as whole note-sequences

2.2 Fleeting notes

2.2.1 Fleeting notes in Obsidian

2.2.2 Processing fleeting notes

2.2.3 Pragmatic alternatives to processing fleeting notes

2.3 Literature notes

2.3.1 The mere reference

2.3.2 The simple literature note

2.3.3 The bullet point list

2.3.4 The excerpt

2.3.5 A few words on highlights

2.3.6 Processing literature notes

## 2.4 Links and their variations

### 2.4.1 Forward linking vs. backward linking

### 2.4.2 Links for building note-sequences

#### 2.4.2.a Adding a new note within a note

#### 2.4.2.b Descriptive linking

#### 2.4.2.c Using metadata and / or plugins

### 2.4.3 General links between related notes

### 2.4.4 Lists of links

## 3 Building and Managing Complexity

### 3.1 Hubs

#### 3.1.1 Lowest level of complexity: Hubs as “entry-notes”

#### 3.1.2 Middle level of complexity: Hubs with a curated link-section

#### 3.1.3 Higher level of complexity: Maps of content (MOC's)

#### 3.1.4 The top layer: The starting page with different areas of interest

#### 3.1.5 Hubs as a field of reduced complexity

### 3.2 Index-Notes

#### 3.2.1 The index-page

#### 3.2.2 Index-notes vs hubs

#### 3.2.3 The interplay between index-notes and hubs

### 3.3 The evolution of structure

#### 3.3.1 Breaking down complex notes

### 3.4 Keeping it simple

#### 3.4.1 Avoid the collector's trap

#### 3.4.2 Resist the urge to write down everything

#### 3.4.3 Avoid the risk of trying to do all at once

#### 3.4.4 Trying to create a perfect Zettelkasten

## 4 Fostering Output

4.1 Realise that most of the work is already done

4.2. Flagging out potential candidates

4.3 Turning notes into a first draft

4.4 Managing project notes

4.5 Flagging out open loops – opportunities to move things forward

## 5 Automate What Can Be Automated with Dataview

5.1 Using Dataview to create an index

5.2 Using Dataview to curate incoming links

5.3 Using Dataview to show open loops across the whole Zettelkasten

5.3.1 Making progress by adding input

5.3.2 Making progress within the Zettelkasten

5.3.3 Making progress towards output

5.4 Using Dataview for project management

5.5 Readwise

5.5.1 Managing the inflow from Readwise

5.5.2 Settings for Readwise

## 6 Conclusion

6.1 Structure is the outcome, not the starting-point

6.2 Rigid and loose structures