



The Reading Archive

ARTICLESIFT BOOK — SAMPLE

Contents

1. Commonplace book	3
2. Zettelkasten	5
3. Digital garden	6

1. Commonplace book

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonplace_book

Commonplace books (or commonplaces) are personal notebooks used to compile any information the owner finds interesting or useful. They can variously contain notes, proverbs, adages, aphorisms, maxims, recipes, quotes, letters, poems, tables of weights and measures, prayers, legal formulas, and other professional references. They have been kept from antiquity, and were kept particularly during the Renaissance and in the nineteenth century.

Entries are most often organized under systematic subject headings[1] and differ functionally from journals or diaries, which are chronological and introspective.[2]

"Commonplace" is a calque of the Latin term *locus communis* (from Greek *tópos koinós*, see literary topos) which means "a general or common place", such as a statement of proverbial wisdom. In this original sense, commonplace books were collections of such sayings, such as John Milton's example. "Commonplace book" is at times used with an expansive sense, referring to collections by an individual in one volume which have a common theme (e.g. ethics) or explores several themes. The term overlaps with aspects of the terms "anthology" or "mixed-manuscript" in these productions but most properly refers to a collection of sayings or excerpts by an individual, often collected under thematic headings.

Commonplaces are a separate genre of writing from diaries or travelogues. Commonplaces are used by readers, writers, students, and scholars as an aid for remembering useful concepts or facts; sometimes they were required of young women as evidence of their mastery of social roles and as demonstrations of the correctness of their upbringing.[3] They became significant in Early Modern Europe. As a genre, commonplace books were generally private collections of information, but as the amount of information grew following the invention of movable type and printing became less expensive, some were published for the general public.

In 1685 the English Enlightenment philosopher John Locke wrote a treatise in French on commonplace books, translated into English in 1706 as *A New Method of Making Common-Place-Books*, "in which techniques for entering proverbs, quotations, ideas, speeches were formulated." Locke gave specific advice on how to arrange material by subject and category, using such key topics as love, politics, or religion. Following the publication of his work, publishers often printed empty commonplace books with space for headings and indices to be filled in by their users. An example is "*Bell's Common-Place Book, Formed generally upon the Principles Recommended and Practised by Mr Locke*" which was published by John Bell almost a century after Locke's treatise. A copy of this blank commonplace was used by Erasmus Darwin from 1776 to 1787, and it was later used by Charles Darwin who called it "the great book" when composing his grandfather's biography.[4]

By the early eighteenth century, they had become an information management device in which a note-taker stored quotations, observations, and definitions. They were used in private households to collate ethical or informative texts, sometimes alongside recipes or medical formulae. For women, who were excluded from formal higher education, the commonplace book could be a repository of intellectual

references. The gentlewoman Elizabeth Lyttelton kept one from the 1670s to 1713[5] and a typical example was published by Mrs Anna Jameson in 1855,[6] including headings such as Ethical Fragments; Theological; Literature and Art.

Commonplace books were used by scientists and other thinkers in the same way that a database might now be used: Carl Linnaeus, for instance, used commonplacing techniques to invent and arrange the nomenclature of his *Systema Naturae* (which is the basis for the system used by scientists today).[7]

The commonplace system of categorized note-keeping was not restricted to books. In the twentieth century, Henri de Lubac traveled with his notes in a sack.[8] Erasmus of Rotterdam traveled with a chest of notes, including examples of well-written Latin that formed the basis of his *Adagia*. [9] In *De Copia* his *Method of Collecting Examples* (*Ratio collegendi exempla*) advocated a hierarchical but ad hoc breakdown of topics: for example, the top-level might be Piety and Impiety, under Piety might come Gratitude, and under these headings one puts example texts.[10] The commonplace proper would be some simple aphorism or moral, possibly several, that can be drawn from the example, such as *The crowd loves and hates thoughtlessly*. [11]

2. Zettelkasten

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zettelkasten>

A Zettelkasten (German: 'slipbox', plural Zettelkästen) or card file consists of small items of information stored on Zetteln (German: 'slips'; singular: Zettel), paper slips or cards, that may be linked to each other through subject headings or other metadata such as numbers and tags.[1][2] It has often been used as a system of note-taking and personal knowledge management for research, study, and writing.[3]

In the 1980s, the card file began to be used as metaphor in the interface of some hypertextual personal knowledge base software applications such as NoteCards.[4] In the 1990s, such software inspired the invention of wikis.[5]

As used in research, study, and writing, a card file consists of many individual notes with ideas and other short pieces of information that are taken down as they occur or are acquired.[6] The notes may be numbered hierarchically so that new notes may be inserted at the appropriate place, and contain metadata to allow the note-taker to associate notes with each other.[6] For example, notes may contain subject headings or tags that describe key aspects of the note, and they may reference other notes. The numbering, metadata, format, and structure of the notes are subject to variation depending on the specific method employed.[7]

The system not only allows a researcher to store and retrieve information related to their research, but has also long been used to enhance creativity.[7][8][9]

The paper slip or card has long been used by individual researchers and by organizations to manage information, including the specialized form of the card catalog.[10]

Coming from a commonplace book tradition,[11] Conrad Gessner (1516–1565) invented his own method of organization in which the individual notes could be rearranged at any time. In retrospect, his recommendation of gluing slips onto bound sheets[12] was an innovation in moving from commonplace books to index cards as a form for scholarly information management.[13]:212–225

The first early modern card cabinet was designed by 17th-century English inventor Thomas Harrison (c. 1640s). Harrison's manuscript on the "ark of studies"[15] (*Arca studiorum*) describes a small cabinet that allows users to excerpt books and file their notes in a specific order by attaching pieces of paper to metal hooks labeled by subject headings.[16] Harrison's system was edited and improved by Vincent Placcius in his well-known handbook on excerpting methods (*De arte excerpendi*, 1689).[14][17] The German polymath Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) was known to have relied on Harrison's invention in at least one of his research projects.[17]

In 1767, Carl Linnaeus used "little paper slips of a standard size" to record information for his research.[18] Over 1,000 of Linnaeus's precursors to the modern index card containing information collected from books and other publications and measuring five by three inches are housed at the Linnean Society of London.[16]

3. Digital garden

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_garden
