



Defining Features Matrix

Type	Active Time	Grading Effort	Content Delivery	Discussion	Content Check	Summary	Feedback
Individual or Group	10 mins	Medium	?	✓	✓	✓	Peer/ Instructor

For the table above, this is suggested time and can be variable depending on your class.

What?

In a table with pre-defined key features (or considerations) and category (or context) headings, students describe in detail the nature of each listed consideration (one consideration per row) for each of the different contexts (one context/category per column).

When?

- To identify distinguishing features across categories that may appear very similar.
- To document how features may appear in varying circumstances.

How?

Online	Face-to-face
<p>Consider assigning the feature matrix as individual work and have students provide feedback on each other's matrix.</p> <p>Student Instructions: For each category, describe in detail how each feature will present itself.</p> <p>Suggested Tech Tool: Padlet in 'Shelf' format, Bb assignment, Google Sheets</p>	<p>Consider pairing with Jigsaw activity and have students complete their 'Defining Features Matrix' by visiting each category's workstation.</p> <p>Student Instructions: For each category, describe in detail how each feature will present itself.</p> <p>Suggested Tech Tool: Padlet, Bb assignment, Google Sheets</p>

Tips

- A variation is to have students decide if the defining feature is present/absent in each category instead of describing in detail.
- Encourage students to link to additional reference material and compare their tables with peers and expert content.

You may also be interested in

- Jigsaw
- Twenty Questions
- Concept Mapping



Why?

WSU Learning Goal	Meets?
Critical and Creative Thinking	
Quantitative Reasoning	
Scientific Literacy	
Information Literacy	
Diversity	
Communication	
Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning	

Go to <https://ucore.wsu.edu/students/learning-goals/> to learn more.

Learn More

Note-taking often requires students to engage with the material on a deeper level of processing and allows students to store information for future review. 'Defining Features Matrix' is an approach to note-taking that is supported by education research ([Katayama & Robinson, 2000](#); [Kauffman, Zhao, & Yang, 2011](#); [Peverly et al., 2013](#)) to be more effective than writing notes given only an outline (headings and subheadings) or when students write notes without additional structure. A successfully completed defining features matrix would require students to carefully analyze, organize, and classify content in a quick to consume manner enhancing the benefits of note-taking. For additional research on note-taking, refer to [this review article](#).