

Taking Notes

The Importance of Good Lecture Notes

1. When you take good lecture notes you will be able to review material for exams directly from your notes.
2. The process of taking notes provides you repetition of the information that you are learning by both listening and writing the information. This repetition helps you to learn the information.
3. Taking notes helps you to keep your attention focused in class.

How to Take Good Lecture Notes

Taking good notes is a three step process part:

1. Preparing
2. Listening and Recording (done during the lecture)
3. Reviewing

Preparing (5-10 minutes)

- Read or skim the chapter prior to attending class. This will help
 - a. To get a general overview of the main ideas and concepts – and will help you to focus your note taking
 - b. Identify unfamiliar terms and concepts
 - c. Identify material that is difficult or unclear
- Read or skim your notes from the previous class to help you focus on preparing to take notes

Listening and Recording (class time)

This is the actual process used to take notes from the class lecture:

- Start each lecture on a new page; use one side only (is neater when reviewing)
- Use a loose-leaf notebook (binder)
- Listen for main ideas and word clues– these are often indicated by words the instructor uses: “the four steps are... the characteristics of... the main reasons... this will be on the test”
- Record diagrams, illustrations, examples
- Write down anything the instructor writes on the board
- Write down unfamiliar vocabulary and unclear areas
- Use abbreviations
- Pay attention. If you find your mind wandering, just “be here now”
- Use note taking methods such as the Cornell Note Taking Method or mind mapping

Reviewing (5-10 minutes)

Review your notes within as soon as possible after the lecture. Students who do this get better grades than those who do not. This helps you to:

- Fill in any information you missed or left out and add facts or additional information or examples
- Fix words or clarify things that you can't understand or that are confusing
- Write out abbreviations that aren't clear
- Identify questions you may have for the instructor

The reviewing step is probably the most important step of note taking and the one that is not used! In addition to daily reviews you should review your notes on a weekly basis - this only takes about 10 minutes and helps you to:

- Move the information from short term to long term memory
- Remember what you are learning
- Be better prepared for tests

Note Taking Tips:

- **Skip spaces** to show changes of topic and to leave room for later insertions or edits, and indent to show subtopics and details.
- **Leave blanks** or put ??? for words, phrases, or ideas you think you may have missed. Directly after class, ask the instructor or another student to help you fill in the blanks.
- **Abbreviate common words** (such as "because" and "and") and other frequently used words (words that are related to the course topic).
- **Edit your notes** after class *that day* by filling in missing information, clarifying information you don't understand, identifying questions you have, Add diagrams or additional information. Edit your notes within the first 24 hours after a lecture.
- **Review these notes** quiz yourself on the topics in your notes. Review daily and weekly. Students who reviewed their notes within one hour after the class remembered 70-80% of the information.
- **Get copies from other students**; you've heard the saying "two heads are better than one."
- **Record what is written on the board**, always write down everything that your instructor writes on the board.
- **Only write on the front side of the paper and write neatly**, this makes reviewing and studying your notes much easier to do.

Note Taking Methods

1. Outline format
2. Running text (looks like a paragraph)
3. Cornell method

Running Text Note Taking Method

Notes on notes:

This is an example of a running text note taking system. Notes are used to help you identify major and minor points in a lecture.

A variety of note taking methods include: 1) running text (looks like a paragraph), 2) outline formats, and 3) the Cornell method

Outline Format

Notes on notes:

1. Use of notes
 - a. Identify major points in a lecture
 - b. Identify minor points in a lecture
2. 3 different note taking systems
 - a. Running text
 - b. Outline
 - c. Cornell

Cornell Note Taking Method

Question Column	Note Taking Section
<i>Make headings into review questions</i>	Notes on notes: Use of notes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify major points in a lecture• Identify minor points in a lecture
What are the 3 kinds of notes?	3 different note taking systems <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Running text• Outline• Cornell