

How To Take Good Notes

LISTEN ACTIVELY



- Be a positive, active listener. Resist distractions, emotional reactions, or boredom.
- Do not read or talk while the instructor is lecturing.
- Pay close attention to the information. Your notes will be more accurate for it.
- Look at the speaker. The closer attention you pay, the less distracted you are likely to become.
- Come to class with the intention of listening.
- Most importantly, pay close attention to the first and last 20 minutes of class. This is typically when the most valuable information is given.

SIT AS CLOSE TO THE FRONT OF THE CLASSROOM AS YOU CAN

- Your vision and hearing are better the closer you are to the front.
- This helps you avoid distractions, such as other classmates, doorways, windows, etc.

ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT INFORMATION YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND



- If appropriate, raise questions if you are not following the lecture. Don't fall behind in the lecture.

TAKE AND KEEP NOTES IN A LARGE NOTEBOOK

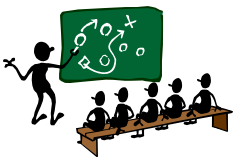
- A large notebook allows you to indent and use outline form in your notes. It also provides the space to later expound your previous notes.

SKIP SPACES BETWEEN YOUR NOTES

- If you leave lots of room, then you will be able to add notes at a later time.
- Extra spaces make it easier for you to find material when you are studying.
- These also can indicate the end of ideas or thoughts and the beginning of new topics.
- Spacing in your notes makes them easy to follow and much more helpful when sitting down to study the material.

DON'T TRY TO TAKE DOWN EVERYTHING THE INSTRUCTOR SAYS

- First, this is absolutely impossible!
- Second, not every bit of information the instructor provides is of equal importance.
- Try listening for the main points and discriminate with the information you write down. Do realize that in some instances, it will be more important for you to write than to think.

**LISTEN TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR FOR SPECIFIC CUES**

- Watch for transitions the instructor makes from one point to the next.
- Pay attention to repetition of points for emphasis.
- Changes in voice inflections can indicate importance of material.
- Enumeration

COPY DOWN ALL INFORMATION WRITTEN ON THE BOARD

- In some instances, blackboard scribble can provide exam questions.
- Information may be useful to you later.
- Even if the information does not later serve as useful, you still haven't wasted anything.

BE CONSISTENT IN YOUR USE OF FORM

- Jot down notes and phrases, not entire sentences.
- Develop some system of short hand, and be consistent in its use.
- Use contractions and abbreviations.
- Use symbols: &, +, @, w/
- Try using outline form.
- Leaving wide left margins, so that you can write comments, questions, or make connections.
- Take notes only on the front of your paper. With the back page blank, you can fold the page, cover your notes, and answer questions when studying.
- Date your notes.
- Write legibly.

