



Tips for Taking Effective Notes

Before Class

- Read or survey the material that will be covered in the upcoming lecture.
- Review notes from the previous class.
- Get the notes from any class session you've missed.
- Meet with your instructor to clarify concepts from the last lecture.

During Class

- Date and title each set of notes, and keep notes from different classes separate.
- Sit where you can hear and see clearly without distractions.
- Don't crowd your notes. Leave blanks to fill in missed items and to expand your notes later on.
- Concentrate! Stay involved in the class and ask questions. Join in class discussions.
- Take too many notes rather than not enough. However, don't try to write each word.
- Write quickly, but make your writing legible enough for your own reading.
- Use abbreviations and symbols to save time.
- Mark ideas that the instructor emphasizes with an arrow, star, or underlining.
- Try to recognize main ideas by signal words that indicate something important is to follow. Listen for words such as "first," "next," "then," "thus," and "in conclusion."
- Pay attention to key phrases, such as "this is important" or "this might be a good test item."
- Add examples your professor provides in order to clarify abstract ideas, and use them to jog your memory when studying later.
- Don't be a clock-watcher. Instructors do not always pace themselves accurately and may cram half of the lecture into the last 15 minutes.
- Learn as much as you can in class because this will help you better understand and complete outside assignments.

After Class

- Review notes within 24 hours of class.
- Some people benefit from rewriting their lecture notes. However, be sure to leave time to *think* about your notes.
- Fill in abbreviations, add omitted points, and correct errors.
- Use information from your text or ask your instructor or a classmate to help you fill in the gaps in your notes.
- Use margin space to write key words or phrases.
- Study by covering your notes and testing yourself on that information using the key words as cues.
- Review your notes several times throughout the week.

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