

Note Taking

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General Note-Taking Tips

What to Write

Listen for cue words that show contrast, repetition, summary and cause and effect. Also, never take notes without thinking about what you are writing down. Thinking about what you write helps you to logically organize the relationships between ideas. Finally, thinking about the lecture, while listening to the lecture assists understanding and, in turn, learning or memorization.

Access Background Knowledge

Knowing the major components of the topic will make it easier to determine what is important to note during the lecture and how to organize the relationships between the ideas. With this background knowledge, you can also create a purpose for the lecture, such as looking to expand or clarify a particular topic. To gain background knowledge,

- Read the chapters before class
- Review previous day's notes
- Anticipate the direction of the topic

Be on Time and Stay until the End

In the first few minutes of class, the professor will often set the direction for the entire lecture and tend to class business, such as announcing a date change for the exam. In the last few minutes, the professor may give important concluding remarks that may be critical to the significance of the topic.

Date and Number your Notes

Dating each lecture and numbering the pages within each day's lecture can help you to organize your notes and to find any missing notes easily.

Write on One Side Only

Writing on only one side of the paper allows you to lay out all of your notes at one time. This can help you make connections between information that you otherwise may not have seen without viewing all the information simultaneously. You can then write cues from which to study on the backside of the paper.

Develop Some Shorthand

Your professors talk at about 120 words per minute; you write at about 25 words per minute. Knowing some shorthand can save valuable time for more effective note taking. Each class will have different long words that can be shortened without confusion. Examples include:

- associated (assoc)
- information (info)
- introduction (intro)

The key here is to be sure you know your shorthand words; creating a list may be helpful.



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