

Note-Taking



Why take notes? Because note-taking is essential to your college success! Good note taking forces you to listen carefully. Your notes serve as a study guide and will supplement the information found in your text. In fact, lectures often include material that is **not** covered in your text. Also, the act of writing down information is an important step in learning the material.

I. Before the Lecture - Set the Stage

- Read all required material before class. This gives you a general idea of what your professor will be lecturing about.
- Bring questions you have about the readings.
- Come prepared! Always bring note-taking materials such as paper and pen.
- Sit front and center! Sitting in the front of the classroom will reduce distractions.
- Write your name, date, and course on the top of your notes.
- Keep your notes for each class separated. Try using a binder with dividers.

II. During the Lecture - Time to Perform

- Watch your instructors for clues that something is important. They will often give you clues by changing their tone of voice, using hand gestures, writing on the board, or simply saying, "This is important, write it down!"
- Don't try and write everything down. Listen for main points, signal words, and repetition. Golden rule: If it is said more than once, write it down!
- Use abbreviations.
- Be an active listener. If you catch yourself day dreaming, bring yourself back to the task at hand.
- If you don't understand something, ASK!
- Use a systematic note taking method such as mind mapping, the Cornell method, or general outline. (See handouts.)
- Use signals to indicate important details such as possible test questions or definitions.
- Develop an "I am Lost" signal. This will help you identify that you may need to ask your professor to clarify something or that you need to look to your text book or a classmate for some help.
- Use graphics and diagrams when possible.

III. After the Lecture- It's a wrap. Time to review!

- Clarify any questions you have about the lecture.
- Look over your notes within 24 hours.
- Rewrite or edit your notes if necessary.
- Fill in missing points or misunderstood terms from text or other sources.
- Use your notes to conduct mini reviews of your class lectures. This will help take information from short-term memory into long-term memory. (This means it will be easier for you to recall the information for a test!)
- Write a short summary of the lecture in your own words.
- Make the information in your notes relevant to you. Try to make connections and examples. This will aid in easier recall of the information.

The Cornell Method

- Draw a vertical line 2.5 inches from the left side of each sheet of note book paper.
- Use the right hand side of the page to record your notes. Capture the main points and ideas of the lecture.
- Leave some space in your notes so that you can add additional information when you review them after the lecture.
- Use the left hand column to write cue words or questions about the notes. The body of the notes will serve as the answers to these questions. Cover up the right hand side and use the questions or cues to quiz yourself over the material covered in the notes.
- Save 2" at the bottom of the page to summarize the lecture in your own words.

Example of Cornell Note-Taking Method

<u>Taking Lecture Notes</u>	
How can I prepare for lectures?	<p>!!!Attendance is Important!!!</p> <p>Preparation</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Separate notebooks and folders. Rule off a 1 ½ to 2 inch left Margin. Read or survey the assignment</p>
What steps are included in a survey?	<p>Survey</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Read the title Read the subtitles Read the summary</p> <p>Surveying builds mental schema</p> <p>NOTE: If the instructor follows the book closely, read and mark it; then, take the book to class.</p>
Summary	It is important to prepare for lecture by reading or previewing the material.

Outline Method

- An outline shows the relationship between major points and supporting ideas.
- Begin your notes with a main heading. What is the lecture about?
- Then identify main topics relating to the overall gist of what the lecture is about.
- Specific ideas and facts about main topics should be placed below the main topics.
- You can use dashes, numbers, letters, or Roman numerals.

John Doe 8/28/06 **Study Skills 101**

Topic: Listening

I. The Process of Listening (ROAR)

- A. **R**epception
 - 1. Processing all sounds within range
 - 2. Hearing the needed Information
- B. **O**rganization and Focus
 - 1. Choosing to listen actively
 - 2. Observing the origin, direction, and intent
- C. **A**ssignment
 - 1. Assigning a meaning to information
 - 2. Hearing the information more than once
- D. **R**eaction
 - 1. Responding to what is heard
 - 2. Reacting can be any response

II. Definitions of Listening (POC)

- A. **P**urpose
- B. **O**bjective
- C. **C**onstructive

Mind Mapping

- Mind mapping can be used as a way of note taking or organizing information to study for a test.
- It works very well for visual learners.
- Start by identifying the main topic. Then identify the key elements of that topic. Finally, identify the details associated with those elements.

In this Mind Map example below, the central topic has been placed in the center of the page and the main ideas related to it are placed on branches that directly connect to the central topic. Any details which support these main ideas are then directly linked to the main ideas (and, thereby, indirectly to the central topic).

