

Tips on Notetaking

Note-taking is a skill in which we all develop our own unique style. Below are some tips which might help you further polish your skills, decrease writing time and boost recall ability of the material.

- Before class starts, quickly review the syllabus and/or chapter to prepare you for the lecture topics.
- Date and number the pages of your notes. Also write the course name for better organization.
- If the lectures follow a certain format such as the syllabus or chapter topics, label the notes accordingly.
- Take notes selectively. Do not be a human tape recorder. Capture the main points and the details to further your understanding of the topic.
- Skip lines or leave a large blank space to indicate moving on to a new idea or subheading.
- Take notes on guest speakers, in-class presentations or videos unless otherwise advised. These materials could mean extra points on the exam.
- Copy all notations made on the board. If it wasn't important, the instructor wouldn't use precious class time to write it out.
- Use symbols to abbreviate, such as:

+ for plus	- for minus
= for equals	x for times
& for and	# for number
> for greater, more, larger	< for less, smaller
w/ for with	w/o for without
w/in for within	/ for per
→ for leads to, results in	← for comes from

For Example: "The diameter of the Earth is four times greater than the diameter of the Moon." becomes: "Earth = 4x > diameter of Moon."

- Substitute numbers with their numerical symbol. 1 for "one" or 3rd for "third".

- Abbreviate by dropping the last several letters of a word. “Approp” for “appropriate”. Or do shorthand style by dropping the vowels. “Lrg” for “large” or “rgstr” for “register”.
- Eliminate small connecting words from your note taking. These include: is, are, was, were, a, an, the, would, this, of. Eliminate pronouns such as: they, these, his, that, them. However, make special note of “and”, “in” and “on”.
- If professor summarizes at the end, use the opportunity to recheck your notes to make sure you have all the main points.
- Forms of Note-Taking:
 1. Outline Method
 - I. Topic sentence or main idea
 - A. Major points providing information about topic
 1. Subpoint that describes the major point
 - a. Supporting details for subpoint
- 2. Pattern Methods
 - Use flowcharts and diagrams to connect the main ideas.
 - Draw a circle in middle labeled with the main topic and connect smaller circles with subheadings and their examples to the main circles and to each other.
- How to Study With Your Notes:
 1. Study Groups: meet with one or two other people in your class. Take turns reading your notes as others follow their notes and compare. Discuss the main points and why your notes may differ.
 2. Recall Method: draw a line down the side of your notes to create a left or right side margin. Read a section of your notes and write the key term, topic or subtopic in the margin. Later cover your notes and see what you can remember by the key word you have written. Do this several times throughout the semester and you will have less to cram immediately before exam day.