

TAKING LECTURE NOTES

I. There are many reasons for taking lecture notes.

- A. Making yourself take notes forces you to listen carefully and test your understanding of the material.
- B. When you are reviewing, notes provide a gauge to what is important in the text.
- C. Personal notes are usually easier to remember than the text.
- D. The writing down of important points helps you to remember them even before you have studied the material formally.

II. Instructors usually give clues to what is important to take down. Some of the more common clues are:

- A. Material written on the blackboard.
- B. Repetition
- C. Emphasis
 - 1. Emphasis can be judged by tone of voice and gesture.
 - 2. Emphasis can be judged by the amount of time the instructor spends on points and the number of examples he or she uses.
- D. Word signals (e.g. "There are **two points of view** on . . ." "The **third** reason is . . ." "In **conclusion** . . .")
- E. Summaries given at the end of class.
- F. Reviews given at the beginning of class.

III. Each student should develop his or her own method of taking notes, but most students find the following suggestions helpful:

- A. Make your notes brief.
 - 1. Never use a sentence where you can use a phrase. Never use a phrase where you can use a word.
 - 2. Use abbreviations and symbols, but be consistent.
- B. Put most notes in your own words. However, the following should be noted exactly:
 - 1. Formulas
 - 2. Definitions
 - 3. Specific facts
- C. Use outline form and/or a numbering system. Indentation helps you distinguish major from minor points.
- D. If you miss a statement, write key words, skip a few spaces, and get the information later.
- E. Don't try to use every space on the page. Leave room for coordinating your notes with the text after the lecture. (You may want to list key terms in the margin or make a summary of the contents of the page.)
- F. Date your notes. Perhaps number the pages.

SAVING TIME ON NOTETAKING

Here are some hints regarding taking notes on classroom lectures that can save time for almost any student.

1. Don't re-write or type your notes again later: **DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!**
2. Do not take notes in shorthand. It is far better to have taken the notes originally in regular writing and then spend the time after that in direct study and **recitation** of the notes.
3. Third, do not record the lesson on a cassette tape or any other tape. If you take notes in class, immediately after class, this person can study them in five minutes before the next class. Furthermore, this student, in looking over his/her notes, may decide that the notes contain only four worthwhile ideas which s/he can highlight, relegating the rest of the lecture to obscurity. **BUT** a lecture on tape has to be listened to in its entirety including the worthwhile points as well as the "garbage".

NOTE MAKING

Learning to make notes effectively will help you to improve your study and work habits and to remember important information. Often, students are deceived into thinking that because they **understand** everything that is said in class they will therefore remember it. **Write it down.**

As you make notes, you will develop skill in selecting important material and in discarding unimportant material. The secret to this skill is practice. Check your results constantly. Strive to improve. Notes enable you to retain important facts and data and to develop an accurate means of arranging necessary information.

Here are some hints on note making.

1. Don't write down everything that you read or hear. **Be alert and attentive to the main points.** Concentrate on the "meat" of the subject and forget the trimmings.
2. Notes should consist of **key words or very short sentences.** If a speaker gets sidetracked it is often possible to go back and add further information.
3. Take accurate notes. You should usually use your own words, but try not to change the meaning. If you quote **directly** from an author, quote **correctly.**
4. Think a minute about your material before you start making notes. Don't take notes just to be taking notes! Take notes that will be of real value to you when you look over them later.
5. Use a **skeleton outline** and show **importance** by **indenting.** Leave lots of white space for later additions.
6. **Omit descriptions and full explanations.** Keep your notes short and to the point. Condense your material so you can grasp it rapidly.
7. **Don't worry about missing a point.**
8. Don't keep notes on oddly shaped pieces of paper. **Keep notes in order and in one place.**

9. Shortly after making your notes, **go back and rework** (not redo) your notes by adding extra points and spelling out unclear items. Budget time for this vital step just as you do for the class itself.

10. **Review your notes regularly.** This is the only way to achieve lasting memory.

Cornell Note Taking Method

Before Class

- Use a 3-ring binder
 - So that handouts can be organized with class notes
- Draw a vertical line 2 inches from the left border
 - Right section is the Note Taking Column
 - Left section is the Recall Column
- Spend 15 minutes before class reviewing previous notes
 - Either earlier in the day or the night before
- Develop questions to ask in class
 - Clarify information
 - Stay alert
 - Indicate your engagement in the class

During Class

- Attend every lecture
 - Arrive early
 - Sit in front in order to stay alert
- Have the attitude that you will
 - Listen actively and closely
 - Take notes of whatever you hear
 - Leave with a set of notes which you will study
- Come to class
 - Ready to engage
 - Ready to take a position different than the professor's
 - Willing to comment on what other students are saying
- Take Notes
 - Write short sentences or phrases
 - If the lecture is well organized write it in outline form
 - Capture the main ideas
 - Use supporting facts and examples
 - Be consistent in using abbreviations

After Class

There are 3 important time periods for learning the information in your notes

1. Immediately after class

- Stay in your seat
- Quickly review your notes
- Identify key points or ideas with circles or brackets
- Identify portions you need more information about
- Ask the professor questions before he/she leaves the classroom

2. Within 24 hours

- Reduce your notes to the most important concepts and facts
- Record them in the left Recall Column
- Put some of the material in a question format
 - Actively working with the material will help you learn it

3. Over time

- Regularly review and practice your notes
- Designate a specific times each week for reviewing
 - Regular review, recitation, and practice moves information into long term memory
- Summarize several pages of notes into one page
 - Reducing the information to a chronological time line or information map

The Cornell Note Taking System

Recall Column

<p>-----2 1/2"-----</p> <p>Reduce ideas and facts to concise jottings and summaries as cues for Reciting, Reviewing, and Reflecting.</p>	<p>-----6"-----</p> <p>Record the lecture as fully and as meaningfully as possible.</p>
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The format provides the perfect opportunity for following through with the 5 R's of note-taking. Here they are:

- 1. Record.** During the lecture, record in the main column as many meaningful facts and ideas as you can. Write legibly.
- 2. Reduce.** As soon after as possible, summarize these ideas and facts concisely in the Recall Column. Summarizing clarifies meanings and relationships, reinforces continuity, and strengthens memory. Also, it is a way of preparing for examinations gradually and well ahead of time.
- 3. Recite.** Now cover the column, using only your jottings in the Recall Column as cues or "flags" to help you recall, say over facts and ideas of the lecture as fully as you can, not mechanically, but in your own words and with as much appreciation of the meaning as you can. Then, uncovering your notes, verify what you have said. This procedure helps to transfer the facts and ideas of your long term memory.
- 4. Reflect.** Reflective students distill their opinions from their notes. They make such opinions the starting point for their own musings upon the subjects they are studying. Such musings aid them in making sense out of their courses and academic experiences by finding relationships among them. Reflective students continually label and index their experiences and ideas, put them into structures, outlines, summaries, and frames of reference. They rearrange and file them. Best of all, they have an eye for the vital-for the essential. Unless ideas are placed in categories, unless they are taken up from time to time for re-examination, they will become inert and soon forgotten.
- 5. Review.** If you will spend 10 minutes every week or so in a quick review of these notes, you will retain most of what you have learned, and you will be able to use your knowledge currently to greater and greater effectiveness.

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