

How To: Taking Effective Notes

When to Take Notes

Most often, students take notes during a class or when reading their textbook or assigned materials. It's important to understand how to determine which information is important and should be included in your notes, while also focusing on the discussion. It includes tips on how to mentally and physically prepare for class, and what to look for in your professor's lecture.

Some Types of Notes

- Outline Method:
 - Organizes Notes
 - in a **structured format**
 - and **highlights key points** of the lecture
- Cornell Method: separates notes into sections--notes, comments/hints, and summary (see example)
- Boxing Method: organizes notes in boxes according to *common topics*
- Charting Method: best used for fact/stat based notes and memorization
- Mapping/Concept Method:
 - physically organizes notes
 - according to their relationship (topic/subtopic)
 - very visually appealing

What to Do When Taking Notes

BEFORE CLASS

- **Complete all outside assignments** prior to class so you have a better understanding of what the professor is referencing.
- **Review** your notes from the previous class and readings in preparation.
- **Be prepared** by bringing the materials you need such as a notebook, pen, pencil, highlighter, eraser, textbook, and a copy of any outside assignments.
- **Sit front and center** in the classroom as it promotes attention and focus.

DURING CLASS

- **Ask questions and participate** in discussions to clarify confusing material and encourage memory association.
- **Highlight or underline** important information
- **Listen + look for verbal and nonverbal clues** such as repeated words or phrases, transition words/phrases like *the main point is, most importantly, to summarize,* and anything written down by the professor or directly referred to as test material
- **Anticipate your professor's lecture style** . Don't let your attitude get in the way.

AFTER CLASS

- **Review your notes for 10 minutes** before your next class or leaving the school. This transfers information from short term memory to long term.
- **Make sure you understand your notes** and edit them for messy handwriting, and fill in missing info.
- **Type your notes within 24 hours**. It requires you to review them and ensures you have them saved.

Criteria of Cornell Method

Lecture Topic (to be filled in)	
Recall or Clues	Record
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main ideas Questions that connect ideas, concepts, etc. Key <i>themes</i> or <i>concepts</i> <p>When To Complete: Post-lecture/class, in review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main lecture notes, outlined Use: abbreviations, shorthand, symbols, short sentences, lists Place spaces between bulleted points <p>When To Complete: During class</p>
Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - 3 sentence summary of notes <p>When To Complete: Summarize immediately after class</p>	

Are You A Good Note Taker? Take the Quiz...

Pre-Lecture	Class A:		Class B:	
Read the assigned material?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Reviewed notes from previous class?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Completed any assignments?	Yes	No	Yes	No
During Lecture				
Used appropriate heading?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Highlighted/underlined important information?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Asked questions?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Listened for nonverbal cues?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Post Lecture				
Reviewed for 10 minutes?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Clarified difficult to read or confusing notes?	Yes	No	Yes	No

Example of the Mapping Method



Analysis: The more YES answers you have, the better you are at taking notes. But consider the 3 time categories for note taking: are your answers clustered in one time? If so, consider changing your note taking and study habits to get the most information out of the class.

Resources:

- <https://medium.goodnotes.com/the-best-note-taking-methods-for-college-students-451f412e264e>
- <https://www.rmittraining.com/blog/note-taking-skills>