



SUCCESSFUL NOTETAKING

Taking notes reinforces what is heard in the classroom and requires active listening. Your outside study and review time will be much easier if you have accurate information. Good notetaking requires practice.

- Be aware of your teacher's lecture style. Take notes as you (attentively) listen to the lecture. Keep notes in an individual notebook for each class or in a loose-leaf binder that has a section for each class.
- Date each day's notes and keep them in chronological order. Some teachers provide outlines that tell you how a series of lectures will be organized; other teachers will deliver their lectures and expect you to write the information in your own notes. Most teachers will emphasize important points by stressing them or repeating them a few times. Make a note in the margin or highlight any information the teacher specifically identifies as important. **If a teacher gives printouts of notes from PowerPoint presentations or if you are able to download the notes, this DOES NOT mean that you don't have to take notes. It is advisable to take notes on the notes that you may have in front of you!**
- Write notes in short phrases, leaving out unnecessary words. Use abbreviations. Write clearly so you will be able to understand your notes when you review them.
- If you make a mistake, a single line through the material is less time consuming than trying to erase or scribble out the whole thing. This will save time and you won't miss any of the lecture.
- Write notes on the right two-thirds of the notebook page. Keep the left one third free for your follow-up questions or to highlight the really important points in the discussion.
- Listen for key ideas. Write them down in your own words. Don't try to write down every word that your teachers say. Some teachers will use the chalkboard or an overhead projector to outline these key ideas. Others will simply stress them in their discussions.
- Soon after class, while the information is still fresh in your mind, create questions directly related to your notes in the left column of the paper. Place these questions across from the information to which it pertains. Highlight or underline any key points, terms, events or people.
- Quiz yourself by covering your notes and trying to answer the questions you developed without referring to your notes. If you need to refresh your memory, simply uncover the note section to find the answers to your questions. Short, quick reviews will help you remember and understand the information as well as prepare for tests.
- Review your notes daily. This reinforces the information and helps you make sure that you understand the material.
- Make sure your notes summarize, not duplicate the material.
- Devise your own use of shorthand.
- Vary the size of titles and headings.
- Use a creative approach, not the standard outline form.
- Keep class lecture notes and study notes together.