

Note Taking

EDUCATION

Taking effective notes is an important skill to help you to study and learn in college. This allows you to learn information better the first time around, and it helps information to be stored in your long-term memory. Consider the following suggestions to improve note taking:



Use outlines, charts, and mind maps to organize ideas and concepts visually.

Take notes in a larger notebook so that you can indent and leave space between ideas. This allows you to go through and add information later.

Review your notes within 24 hours of taking them. Research has shown that students lose 50% of what they learn if they don't review notes following the lecture.

Avoid re-copying your notes. Your time is better spent re-reading and thinking about your notes.

Focus on main ideas, themes, and concepts. Don't write down everything that you hear. Focus on the central points of the lecture that will most likely be on your test or quiz.

Leave blanks in your notes for words, ideas, and dates that you didn't hear so you can fill them in after class.

Mark places in your notes with a question mark for information that you need more help to understand. This can remind yourself to go back and review a section later to ask the lecturer during their office hours.



STRATEGIES

Use a specific note-taking strategy like Cornell Notes:

Cornell Notes

- 1 Using one side of your paper, draw a vertical line a few inches from the left side of the paper (or use the left margin) and a horizontal line a few inches from the top.
- 2 Write the lecture topic and date in the top portion of your paper.
- 3 Use the center portion to take notes during the lecture, while focusing on the main points and using efficient note-taking strategies.
- 4 Use the left-hand margin to indicate key terms, phrases, and concepts that will help you review for the exam or write a paper.
- 5 Write a summary of each page of notes or the lecture in the bottom section.
- 6 Use your notes as a study tool by covering up the middle notes section and quizzing yourself on the content with the left-hand margin or key words, phrases, and concepts.

TECHNOLOGY

Use note-taking and organization apps like OneNote, EverNote, Notably, and Ulysses. You can upload lecture recordings from a smart pen or phone (as discussed in the Listening and Understanding infographic) into these programs.

