

Tips For Taking Notes

- Use your own note-taking method. As you take notes in each of your classes, figure out what works best for you.
- Be neat and orderly. Take notes in ink, neatly, and organize them by course and date. Use a different spiral notebook for each course or use loose-leaf paper organized in a three-ring binder. Divide the note-taking page into 1/3 and 2/3 sections. In the 2/3 section, take notes in class. Use the 1/3 section to write your thoughts when you review the notes.
- Consider taking notes in outline form.
- Pay attention in class. In class focus your attention on the material being presented. Concentrate on the main points. Be sure to catch the first point and introduction to the lecture. These may be the keys to the whole lecture. This means arriving to class on time. Sit in the front of the class.
- Listen with an open mind. Evaluate the importance and meaning of what you hear. Don't let negative feelings about an instructor, concept, or course cause you to stop paying attention.
- Recognize signals from the instructor. Instructors will offer signals to help students follow lectures, identify possible exam questions, and pick out main ideas. Highlight this information so that you will know to read it carefully when studying for the exam. Copy any important chart, table, equation, definition, formula, new term, or any other aid to learning.
- Be concise. Keep your notes short and to the point. Write only the key ideas in your own words. Use abbreviations, symbols, and sentence fragments to save time.
- Make a time line for yourself. Write in your notes all the required and suggested assignments, including any key information and all due dates. Highlight assignments and due dates.
- Use a tape recorder effectively. Use a tape recorder as a back-up to your written notes. Do not let the tape recorder do the listening for you.
- Take notes in different colors. Use colors as organizers in your notes. Signal important points in one color and use different colors for lecture notes, notes from the textbook, and your own thoughts about the material.
- Use abbreviations whenever possible.