

NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES

When you enter a classroom, be prepared to take notes. Whether it is a science, literature, or psychology class, you will need to record the material from the lecture as well as the discussion points that are interesting or useful to your work in the course. Students take notes because it forces them to be actively present by listening carefully and tests their understanding of the material. Students can also use notes as a way to gauge what is important in assigned readings. Most importantly, notes can play a vital role in anchoring knowledge if used effectively as part of a comprehensive study strategy.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

• Get to class early enough to find a seat where:

- You can hear and see the professor/board/PowerPoint
- You can avoid distractions

• Prepare yourself mentally to speak up in class if you need clarification.

• Review the readings in advance of class and come prepared with a set of unanswered questions.

• Have your notebook/laptop/binder ready, your word document formatted, and/or your Cornell Method notepaper lined.

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

• Listen for important pieces of information – tone of voice, repetitions, summaries at the end of class, reviews given to begin class, the amount of time spent on certain topics.

• Take lecture notes in your own words so that it makes sense to you – don't copy verbatim.

• If you are going to type while in class, make sure you have permission in advance and know whether or not you'll need a document template.

• Abbreviations are useful, but can be confusing if you don't know what they mean when you go back to your notes, so be consistent and include an abbreviation key in your notes.

• Schedule time to review your notes within 24 hours of taking them. This strategy leads to much higher retention rates and saves a lot of time in the long run. It also takes the pressure off of writing furiously to capture everything the first time.

• Make your notes brief – never use a sentence where you can use a phrase, and never use a phrase where you can use a word.

• Use outline form and/or a numbering system. Indentation helps you distinguish major from minor points.

• Date your notes and number the pages.

Don't be afraid to experiment with new strategies for note taking.
Be sure to try something new for at least a week or two before rushing to judgment.