

Note Taking Techniques

The most comprehensive note taking systems require attention on your part. You must be alert enough in class to take legible, meaningful notes. You can't rely on "writing everything down" because a lot of information in a given lecture won't help you actually learn the material. If you have problems determining the specific relevant points in a particular class, you can always ask the professor to clarify them for you.

THE 2-6 METHOD:

The 2-6 refers to the way you divide the space on your notepaper. Make two columns, using the red line on the left of the page as your border. Then, when you take notes in class, use the 6 column for the notes and the smaller 2 column on the left as a highlighting system. Write main headings and important points on the left, including material you think you will be tested on. When you're finished, you should have a comprehensive page of information that you can quickly scan for important points. Studying is 99% perspiration; if you give it a real, concentrated effort over the course of a semester you will see an improvement. Your academic success is entirely up to you.

By George Mason University

SPLIT PAGE METHOD:

Class lectures and your textbook--they're the primary sources of course content and you need to learn both. So combine them with the split page method of taking notes. Just divide your notebook page in half lengthwise. Draw a line down the middle of the page. Take class notes on one side of the page and outline the text on the other side. When you study you'll have both. Class notes and text together, integrated. Some students find it helpful to add a third column for questions they need to ask the professor. - By Sherry Reynolds

USING GROUP NOTES:

Are you tired of struggling to keep up with a lecture while copying page after page of notes in class? My advice? Don't take the notes -- at least not every day. Instead, form a group with some of your classmates and take turns taking good class notes. When it's not your day to be the note-taker, really concentrate on what is being said in class. You might want to jot down a few particularly important points, but mostly try to participate in class. Ask questions when you can't understand the point your teacher is trying to get across, and score points by answering questions your teacher asks. After class you can either photocopy the notes from your classmate, or better yet, copy them over by hand while reviewing in your mind what happened in class. - By Fred Weening

Secrets to Taking Better Notes

There is no magic to taking good notes, just common sense. It's simply a matter of being thorough and accurate. Now, not many people can write fast enough to capture everything their professor says in class, so it is a good idea to also use a tape recorder (make sure you have permission from your instructor first). That way you won't miss something while you write, and you can double-check the tape for accuracy. Whether you use a recorder or not, it's important to transcribe your notes as soon as possible while the subject is still fresh in your mind. By re-writing or re-typing your notes, you become more familiar with the material. You mentally reinforce what was said in class. And you get practice writing the information, making it easier to write the material a second time whether it be for a test or a term paper. - By Brian Pitzer

NOTEWORTHY NOTES: Are your grades as good as you want them to be? Are your notes worth reviewing? Notes are phrases and abbreviations that we hurriedly jot down while trying to follow a lecture. Later, when we go back to review our notes, there are times when we can't seem to understand or remember what those key words and phrases meant; sometimes we can't even read our own handwriting. Here is a note-taking study tip that has proven to be effective. After you have finished class, immediately rush to the nearest computer lab and retype your notes. You need to rewrite those phrases as complete thoughts and sentences; dot your I's, cross your T's and use "cut and paste" to put your notes into some type of a logical sequence. While retyping your notes you are using several modalities: you review as you read your notes aloud, you use your hand to type, and you reread again as you proof read what you have typed. Research indicates that 80% of new material can be recalled if you review notes within the first 24 hours of presentation. Also, clean typed notes are easier to read and highlight as you study. If you retype your notes daily, you will keep the task from becoming overwhelming, you will learn good study habits that aid in memory retention and, at the same time, improve your grades. - By Janet Jenkins

ATTEND CLASS: The most important advice I can give to you is to make sure you attend your classes. Attendance in class enhances the chance you'll get a passing grade in a course. In addition to attending class, it is important to brush up on your note-taking skills to really achieve optimum success. Some general recommendations for improving note-taking skills are to: Read all textbook material relevant to the topic being covered prior to attending class.

Make sure you take notes in class. If you fail to take notes, much of what you learn from the lecture will be forgotten in a few days. If you have something written down on paper, you can always refer to the material later. By attending class and utilizing the note-taking techniques just described, your chances for success in college will increase significantly. - By Kiran Misra

PREPARE FOR THE LECTURE: The greatest advantage is that you are familiar with the subject you know what to ask you are not going to waste time by writing down stuff that is already there in your study material. Rather, you know what to write, where to pick links and to clear your concepts. By the time the lecture is over, you are in a much clearer state of mind. This way, taking down notes becomes more meaningful and worth the time you spent doing it. - By Ms. Sreelatha Anand

USE COLORS: This may take a little bit longer but it will work. Just give it a chance. When you are taking notes change the color of your pen! Don't write in blue or black ink. Writing in color will help you retain 50% - 80% more of the information without reading it a second time (also highlight in purple). I am a teacher of adult education and this is the rule for my class room. - By Nicole Watts

<http://www.academictips.org/acad/literature/notetaking.html>