

The Learning Center

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Note-taking Worksheet

I. Common note-taking problems:

- Problem: Difficulty focusing on a lecture.

Solution: Sit near the front of the room, and preview reading before class.

- Problem: Instructor speaks too quickly.

Solution: Devise a shorthand system and/or take group notes.

- Problem: Difficulty sorting information.

Solution: Preview assigned readings.

II. General note-taking guidelines:

1. Date and identify each set of notes.
2. Write on only one side of the page.
3. Copy diagrams or anything else the instructor puts on an overhead or writes on the board.
4. Try to use your own words as much as possible.
5. Review and edit your notes as soon as possible after class.

III. Notes from a text:

1. Read a section of your textbook chapter
 - a. Do not take notes at first; just read to understand the material in the textbook and get a feel as to what the major points are in the section.
2. Review the material.
 - a. Locate the main ideas
 - b. Set the book aside
 - c. Paraphrase this information to yourself
 - d. *Remember that you are still reading just to understand; do not take any notes yet!

3. Write the paraphrased ideas as your notes.
 - a. Do not copy information directly from the text.
 - b. Add enough detail for you to understand the concepts in the text.
4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 until you have finished the assigned reading.
 - a. Do a little at a time. If you do too much, you will not absorb as much information

IV. Notes from a lecture:

1. Before the lecture:
 - a. Check the syllabus to get an idea of what topics/chapters will be discussed.
 - b. Complete any outside reading or assignments for that class.
 - c. Review the text assignment.
 - d. Review notes from the previous lecture.
2. During the lecture.
 - a. Sit near the front of the room to eliminate distractions.
 - b. Write down the title of the lecture and the date.
 - c. Write notes on only one side of the page.
 - d. Use abbreviations.
 - e. Be brief in your note taking. Summarize the notes in your own words not the instructor's.
 - f. Mark ideas that the professor emphasizes with a highlighter or symbol.
 - g. Copy anything on an overhead or on the chalkboard especially graphs or outlines.
 - h. If you missed certain points in the lecture, ask the professor at the end of class to go over it again.
 - i. Listen for signal words:
 - i. "There are three main reasons why..."
 - ii. "Most importantly..."
 - iii. "For instance..."

- iv. “For example...”
 - v. “As a result...”
 - j. Keep alert for points your instructor repeats.
 - k. Ask questions to clarify points, or ask the professor to slow down.
3. After class:
- a. Revise your notes as quickly as possible immediately after the lecture.
 - b. Arrange with another student to compare notes.
 - c. Coordinate your reading notes with your lecture notes
 - d. Constantly review the notes, especially before each class.

Information from this worksheet was gathered from the following:

<http://www.iss.stthomas.edu/studyguides/booknote.htm>

<http://www.ohiou.edu/aac/tip/lectures.html>