

## NOTETAKING TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

You can think about four TIMES FASTER than a lecturer can speak. Effective LISTENING requires the expenditure of energy; to compensate for the teacher's rate of presentation, you have to actively intend to listen. NOTETAKING is one way to enhance listening, and using a systematic approach to the taking and reviewing of your notes can add immeasurably to your understanding and remembering the content of lectures.

### WHY TAKE NOTES?

- Notes provide a permanent record to help you learn and remember later.
- The underlying organization and purpose of a lecture will become clear through notetaking.
- The lecture may contain information unavailable anywhere else.
- They provide a record of information and announcements.
- Taking notes helps you maintain attention in class.

### BEFORE CLASS

- Have all notetaking materials ready (paper, pen, etc.).
- Develop a mind-set geared toward listening.
- Do what you can to improve physical and mental alertness (fatigue, hunger, time of day, and where you sit in the classroom all affect motivation).
- Sit close to the lecturer where she often makes eye contact.
- Pre-read relevant reading assignments to acquaint yourself with main ideas, new technical terms, etc.
- Test yourself over the notes from the previous lecture while waiting for class to begin.
- Know what types of tests are given and the teacher's lecture style to help in selecting main ideas while taking notes.
- Use a separate notebook with pockets (to carry handouts, scantrons, etc.) for each course.
- Date and title each page of your notes in case they get separated and disorganized.

### DURING CLASS

- Paraphrase your notes—don't copy word for word what the lecturer is saying. (Listen more than you write.)
- Take notes in a semi-outline form for quickness and better concentration.
- Avoid "personality listening." Spend more time listening to the context rather than judging the lecturer.
- Watch the speaker for verbal, postural, and visual clues as to what's important.
- Pay close attention to the first and last ten or fifteen minutes of class. Lecture material from the previous session is usually reviewed or the instructor picks up the pace to include remaining important facts or summaries.
- Keep taking notes during discussion for additional examples, information, and clarification of ideas.
- Write down examples given by the instructor to help you understand while reviewing.
- Ask questions if you don't understand or mark in your notes points of confusion to ask about after class.
- Resist distractions, emotional reactions, or boredom.
- If you get behind, skip a few spaces to fill in later.
- Write clearly on one side of the paper to prevent "bleed throughs." Use the back page to note your own ideas, include additional information, or predict test questions.

- Write efficiently and legibly, not perfectly. Notes can be corrected later.
- Use graphics, symbols, and abbreviations, but have a key in case you forget their meanings later.
- Be consistent in your notetaking with use of form, abbreviations, and symbols. Leave generous space between main ideas and sub-topics to enhance organization of ideas. Use the extra space to add examples or other notes while reviewing.
- Listen carefully for transitional words that indicate a new topic, subtopic, or relationship (e.g., “another...,” “on the other hand,” “at the same time”).

## **AFTER CLASS**

- Review as soon as possible after class, within 24 hours.
- Fill in missing points or misunderstood terms and clear up any questions raised by the lecture from the text, classmates' notes, teacher, and/or grader.
- Edit notes by making corrections, labeling main points, adding "recall" clues, and expected test questions.
- Make notes of your ideas and reflections, and keep them separate from those of your instructor.
- Make up and answer possible test questions.
- Don't retype or rewrite notes; use that extra time studying your notes.
- Create mind-maps or networks (visual diagrams) as summaries to help think through new ideas and remember them for exams.
- Review your notes periodically. Glance at your recall clues and recite aloud facts and ideas as fully as you can in your own words before reading the notes. This procedure is the most powerful learning technique known to psychologists.
- Make notecards of terms to be memorized and of other materials that you are having difficulty in remembering (e.g., cause/effect with the cause identified on one side of the notecard and the effect identified on the opposite side).