

SUCCESSFUL NOTETAKING

- Taking notes reinforces what we hear in the classroom and requires active listening. Having accurate information makes your outside study and review time that much easier. Good notetaking requires practice.
- Be aware of each teacher's lecture style; learning how to adapt to each style takes patience. Take notes as you (attentively) listen to the lecture. Keep notes in an individual notebook for each class or in a loose-leaf binder that has a section for each class. Your teacher may have certain requirements.
- Date each day's notes, and keep them in chronological order. Some teachers provide outlines that tell you how a series of lectures will be organized; other teachers will deliver the information and you will write the information in your notes. Most teachers will emphasize important information by stressing the points to them a few times. Make a note of this information, although any information that specifically identifies as important.
- Write notes in short phrases, leaving out unnecessary words. Use abbreviations. Write clearly so you will be able to understand your notes when you review them.
- If you make a mistake, a single line through the material is less time consuming than trying to erase the whole thing. This will save time and you won't miss any of the lecture. Don't copy your notes over to make them neat; write them neatly in the first place. Don't create opportunities to waste your time.
- Write notes on the right two-thirds of the notebook page. Keep the left one-third free for your follow-up questions or to highlight the really important points in the discussion.
- Listen for key ideas. Write them down in your own words. Don't try to write down every word that your teachers say. Some teachers will use the chalkboard, an overhead projector or a PowerPoint presentation to outline these key ideas. Others will simply stress them in their discussion.
- Soon after class, while the information is still fresh in your mind, create questions directly related to your notes in the left one-third of the page. Place these questions at the top of the page, to which it pertains. Highlight or underline any key words or terms even if you are not sure of their meaning. Covering the 2/3 side of your notes and try to answer the questions you developed without referring to your notes. If you need to refresh your memory, simply uncover the page section to find the answers to your questions. Short, quick reviews will help you to understand the information as well as prepare for tests.
- Review your notes daily. This reinforces the information and helps you make sure that you understand the material.
- Make sure your notes summarize, not duplicate, the material.
- Devise your own use of shorthand.
- Vary the size of titles and headings.
- Use a creative approach, not the standard outline form.
- Keep class lecture notes and study notes together.



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