



# Important SKILL

## Note Taking



Adequate note taking is a necessary skill to efficient learning. Think over the following suggestions and improve your note-taking method where needed. Remember the lecture is where you learn what the teacher thinks is important.

1. Collect notes for each course in one place, in a separate notebook or section of a notebook.
2. Write down the title of the lecture, name of the class and the date on the first sheet for each lecture.
3. Use a large, loose-leaf notebook. Use only one side of the paper (you then can lay your notes out to see the direction of a lecture). Draw a vertical line 7 centimeters from the right side of you paper. This is the recall column. Notes will be taken to the left of this line. Later key words or phrases can be written in the recall column which give you the main idea of the lecture.
4. Make some preparation for the lecture so that you will be more likely to predict the organization of the lecture. Check the course outline to see if the teacher has listed the topic or key ideas in the upcoming lecture and complete outside reading or reference assignments. Review notes from the previous lecture.
5. Be brief in your note taking. Summarize your notes in your own words, not the instructor's. Remember: your goal is to understand what he/she is saying, not to try to record exactly everything he/she says. Try to recognize main ideas by signal words that indicate something important is to follow. Examples: "First, Second, Next, Then, Thus, Another important...", etc. Keep alert for points that your instructor emphasizes by means of repetition, writing on chalkboard, extended comment..., etc.
6. Give special attention to details not covered in the textbook. Lectures contain information not available anywhere else. This will be your only chance to learn it.
7. Copy ALL diagrams, drawings and other illustrations that are put on the board.
8. Do not perform manual activities that will detract from taking notes. Do not doodle or play with your pen. These activities break eye contact and concentration.
9. If there is a summary at the end of the lecture, pay close attention to it. You can use it to check the organization of your notes. If your notes seem disorganized, copy down the main points covered in the summary. It will help in revising your notes later.
10. Copy down everything on the board, regardless. Did you ever stop to think that every blackboard scribble may be a clue to an exam item? You may not be able to integrate what is on the board into your lecture notes, but if you copy it, it may serve as a useful clue for you later. If not, what the heck -- you haven't wasted anything. You were in the classroom anyway.
11. Review and edit your notes as soon as possible after class. Use your right recall column to fill in abbreviations, add omitted points, correct errors, and identify key words and phrases.

*Create room for adding "key" thoughts later*

*Don't write too much. Don't miss the lecture.*