

Improving Your Note Taking <http://www.educationcorner.com/note-taking.html>

Effective note taking is one of the keys to succeeding in school. Students should devote a considerable amount of time reviewing information discussed during classroom lectures. These note taking strategies will help you to take better notes:

- **Make clear and accurate notes**
Make sure to take **legible** and accurate notes since it is not uncommon to forget key details discussed during class after it has ended. Students who keep accurate notes can review them later to review key points, recall necessary detail, solidify knowledge and study up on concepts they didn't fully comprehend during the lecture. Additionally, since teachers frequently cover many topics during the course of their lectures, effective notes enable students to concentrate on specific topics that are most relevant.
- **Come to class prepared**
Students properly prepared for classes usually take better notes than those who come unprepared. Proper preparation includes completing assigned reading prior to class and reviewing notes from previous classes. Students who review their notes from previous lectures (1) will have a better context for learning new topics presented in the next lecture and (2) can ask questions about confusing concepts they didn't quite understand from the previous lecture.
- **Compare your notes**
To ensure your notes are as accurate and detailed as possible, compare them with the notes of other students after class is over. This strategy will make classroom notes more thorough and precise.
- **Minimize distractions**
Effective note takers avoid classroom distractions. This can include sitting in spots with fewer distractions and not sitting near friends that you might want to talk with during class.
- **Organize your notes**
Notes organized by date, class, and subject make it easier to locate specific lecture details. It is also a good idea to keep information from different dates and classes separated or to begin each class with a new piece of paper. A good format for organizing your notes is the **Cornell System for Taking Notes**.
- **Use abbreviations and symbols**
Since teachers usually cover a lot of information during each lecture, it can be hard to write down everything important they say. This is why we recommend using symbols and that you abbreviate long words and use short phrases in your notes when possible.
- **Write clearly**
The most copious notes will be of no benefit if you can't read them. This is why it is important to use good penmanship when taking notes. It is also recommended that you leave space in margins and near key concepts in your notepad, so you can add important details relating to previous lecture topics that are addressed during future lectures.
- **Review your notes**
In order to retain information discussed during lectures, it is best to review notes immediately after class. This will help you better understand the lecture, your notes, and it will enable you to focus on what you just learned for long-term retention. You should review your notes a second time just before your next lecture. You should continue to review your notes on a regular basis between your lectures and your exams.
- **Write down questions**
No matter how intelligent a student is, from time to time they're bound get confused and end up having questions unanswered by the lecture. For this reason, it is a good idea to write down questions to ask after class, or during subsequent lectures.