

NOTE-TAKING HINTS

Good note-taking skills will help ensure academic success because effective note-taking will enable the student to record lecture and textbook information in a systematic, efficient way. An organized method of note-taking will increase a student's memory and retention of material, integrating the information for tests and mastering the material studied. Below are some suggestions for taking good notes in classroom lectures.

I. Before the lecture begins:

- A. Check the course outline to see if the lecturer has listed the main and/or key ideas in the upcoming lecture. If so, convert this information into questions the lecture will answer.
- B. Complete outside reading or reference assignments prior to class.
- C. Review the text assignment and any reading notes taken.
- D. Review notes from the previous lecture.

II. During the lecture:

- A. Have your pen and paper ready at the start of class.
- B. Write down the title of the lecture, name of the course, and the date.
- C. Watch the speaker carefully; it helps make the lecture more personal. Also, if you act attentive, you will more likely be attentive.
- D. Listen carefully to the introduction (if there is one.) Have the lecturer briefly outline what he/she will cover during the lecture. By knowing the outline, you will be better prepared to anticipate what notes you will need to take.
- E. Be brief in your note-taking. Summarize notes in your own words, not the lecturer's. Remember: **Your goal is to understand what he/she is saying, not to record it.**
- F. Try to recognize main ideas by signal words that indicate something important is to follow. **Examples:** first, second, next, then, also, because, in addition, another important, etc.
- G. Jot down details or examples that support the main ideas. Give special attention to details not covered in the text.
- H. 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.
- I. At the end of the lecture, ask questions about points you did not understand.
- J. In a paragraph, summarize the lecture in your own words to be sure that you understood it. This technique also reinforces the information.

III. After the lecture:

- A. Revise your notes as quickly as possible, preferably immediately after the lecture since you will still remember a good deal of the lecture. Include anything left out during the lecture.
- B. During the first review period after the lecture, coordinate reading and lecture notes.
- C. Actively review your lecture and reading notes at least three times a week. Active review includes creating note cards, summary sheets, and reviewing aloud. It is also a good idea to review the lecture notes prior to the next lecture.

Researchers indicate that learning is a progressive activity. If you follow these suggestions, to predict questions and review material periodically, you will have **80% retention of the material covered**. This leaves only 20% for test review – a major saving of time and effort which will result in greater success!