

## The Use of Abbreviations and Symbols

To help you take notes more rapidly, the following list of general ideas for abbreviations is provided. One warning; you must use abbreviations judiciously. It is wise to introduce into your note-taking system only a few of the abbreviations at a time. The overuse of abbreviations may leave you with a set of notes that is difficult to read. The criterion of good note-taking is that you can read and re-read your notes with no hesitation and with clear comprehension.

You may select one or any combination of these ideas to try out in your own note-taking. Naturally, only those ideas that fit your needs should be used.

1. Symbols. Symbols are especially helpful to students in engineering and mathematics.

$\neq$	= does not equal	$f$	= frequency
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2. Create a family of symbols.

O	= organism	(S	= individuals
O	= individual		

3. Leave out the periods in standard abbreviations.

cf	= confer (Latin, compare)	dept	= department
eg	= exempli gratia (Latin, for example)	NYC	= New York City

4. Use only the first syllable of a word.

pol	= politics	lib	= liberal
dem	= democracy	cap	= capitalism

5. Use the entire first syllable and only the first letter of the second syllable.

subj	= subject	tot	= totalitarianism
cons	= conservation	ind	= individual

6. Eliminate final letters. Use just enough of the beginning of a word to form an easily recognizable unit.

assoc	= associate, associated	chem	= chemistry
ach	= achievement	conc	= concentration
biol	= biological	max	= maximum
info	= information	rep	= repetition
intro	= introduction		

7. Omit vowels from the middle of words, and retain only enough consonants to provide a recognizable skeleton of the word.

bkgd = background  
ppd = prepared  
prblm = problem

chem = chemistry  
gvt = government

8. Use an apostrophe.

gov't = government

cont'd = continued

9. Form the plural of the symbol word or abbreviated word by adding "s".

/\_\_\_/s = areas  
chaps = chapters  
co-ops = cooperatives

fs = frequencies  
/s = ratios

10. Use "g" to represent "ing" endings.

decr<sup>g</sup> = decreasing  
ckg = checking

estg = establishing  
exptg = experimenting

11. Use a dot to represent rate. A dot placed over a symbol or a word indicates the word "rate".

$\dot{v}$  = vibrating rate

$\dot{f}$  = frequency rate

12. Short words should generally be spelled out. Symbols, signs, or abbreviations for short words will make the notes too dense with "shorthand".

in	to	but
at	key	for

13. Leave out unimportant verbs.      went      came      be

14. Leave out "a" and "the".

15. If a term, phrase, or name is initially written out in full during the lecture, initials can be substituted whenever the term, phrase, or name is used again.

Initial writing: . . . and the effect of the Modern Massachusetts party  
will be felt . . . . .

Subsequently : MMP

16. Use symbols for commonly recurring connective or transitional words.

& = and      w/ = with      w/o = without  
vs = against