

5 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE NOTE TAKING

Studies show that without review, 47% of what a person learns is forgotten within 20 minutes and 62% is forgotten after the first day (University Texas, Austin TX). Having accurate, readable lecture notes is an absolute necessity!

GO TO CLASS PREPARED

- ☐ Read or at least “survey” material before class so you have context.
- ☐ Know the chapter objectives and master unfamiliar vocabulary.
- ☐ Use a separate color-coded notebook and folder/binder for each class. Have other supplies (e.g. pen, text book, handouts) ready to use.
- ☐ Review notes from the previous class before the next class meeting. Mark information you don't understand and ask the instructor to review.



ENGAGE IN CLASS ACTIVELY

- ☐ Learning is not a spectator sport! Start with a positive attitude and consciously pay attention.
- ☐ As you listen and take notes in class, connect what the instructor is saying with what you already know. Ask yourself: What does this mean? How will I use this information? Do I understand this, or do I need clarification?
- ☐ Keep your text open and note page numbers that coincide with lecture information.
- ☐ As needed, ask for clarification, an example, or for the information to be repeated.

DEVISE A NOTETAKING SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR YOU

(SEE BACK FOR EXAMPLES)

- ☐ There are formal systems of notetaking, but develop a system that works for you—and stick to it.
- ☐ Put the date on each page of your notes so you have a chronological record.
- ☐ Develop a set system of abbreviations and symbols. When taking math notes, it's good to write out the process (as opposed to just writing a sample problem) using words you understand.
- ☐ Include relevant pictures, diagrams, etc.
- ☐ For concepts you don't understand, leave blank space so you can write in clarification later.

FOCUS ON CONTENT

- ☐ Do not write what your instructor says word-for-word. Try to distill main points and write them in your own words to ensure you understand what was said.
- ☐ Include examples, which are often more memorable.
- ☐ If the instructor writes something on the board or emphasizes/ repeats a concept, write it down.
- ☐ Include your own thoughts and commentary but be sure to mark when the ideas are yours!
- ☐ Write definitions word for word but be sure you understand them otherwise you won't be able to remember and use them when it matters.
- ☐ Highlight, write in, and annotate your text book or other class readings.

REVIEW AND EDIT YOUR NOTES

- ☐ Review your notes within 24 hours of the class. Do they make sense? If not, clarify them.
- ☐ For accuracy, compare your notes to the textbook. If you notice a discrepancy, ask the instructor or a classmate for more information.
- ☐ Type or copy handwritten notes; this is one way to review and start the studying process.
- ☐ Make flashcards from your notes (when this makes sense for the content). They are portable and easy to use while studying. Plus, creating them can help you remember the content.

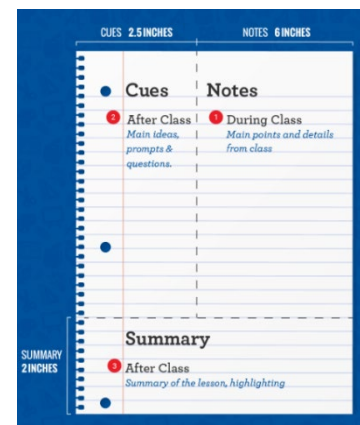
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NOTETAKING SYSTEMS

These are examples of popular notetaking systems. Choose a system that makes sense for you, then use it, change it, or pick pieces from each and create a new method!

CORNELL METHOD

Divide your paper into three sections. Take notes during class/lecture and pull out main points, key terms, or questions for the “cues” section. After the lecture, summarize the information at the bottom of the page.



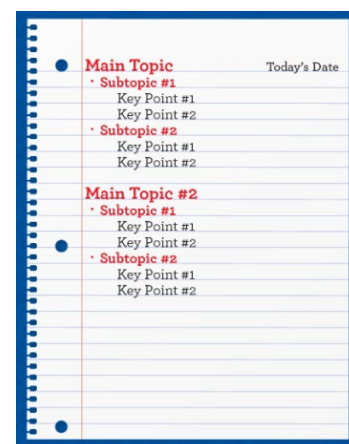
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THEORIST	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	YEARS ACTIVE	STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Jean Piaget	Switzerland	1920s through 1970s	1. sensorimotor (0–2) 2. preoperational (2–7) 3. concrete operational (7–12) 4. formal operational (12–adulthood)
Erik Erikson	Denmark (studied in Austria, emigrated to US in 1930s)	1930s through 1980s	1. trust vs. mistrust (infants) 2. autonomy vs. shame and doubt (toddler) 3. initiative vs. guilt (preschool-K) 4. industry vs. inferiority (elementary school) 5. identity vs. role confusion (teen years) ***See also stages of adult development.

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CHARTING METHOD

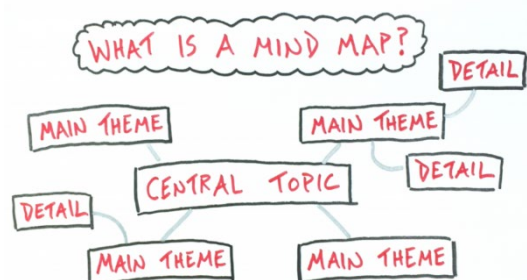
Charting requires that you first know what categories of information will be covered during a lecture, which works great for some classes and poorly for others. Create columns of the categories and sort the information from lecture (or from your textbook) into these categories.



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OUTLINE METHOD

Outlining is a more formal method that many may recognize from high school. Write main ideas as headings; note subtopics below with bullet points or a lettering and numbering system. For better visual cuing, try boxing or highlighting the main topics and circling or underlining the subtopics.



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MAPPING METHOD

The mapping method works well for visual learners who don't generally think in a linear or traditional outline way. For this method, box a main idea in the center and write subtopics around it. Circle the subtopics and connect related topics and ideas with lines. This style can be more creative and organic but can also become unruly.

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