



Taking effective notes is an essential part of the learning process. A study by the Cambridge Psychological Society demonstrated that two weeks after a seminar, participants only remembered on average 8.4 percent of what they had heard. Even if you are an auditory learner, note-taking is necessary if you want to recall information accurately, so find a note taking method or combine a few that work for you!

## Why Take Notes?

- Note taking promotes active listening.
- It provides you with an accurate record of information.
- It makes you restructure information (interpreting, condensing, organizing).
- It provides repetition of information.
- We forget 60% of what we hear after only 9 hours, so if you don't write it down, you lose the information.



## Good notes...

- Are organized.
- Distinguish main points from details.
- Include examples.
- Indicate lecture patterns.
- Allow for self-testing.
- Stand the test of time.
- Use abbreviations.
- Include the course name, date, class notes, and a summary.

## Tips for Effective Note Taking

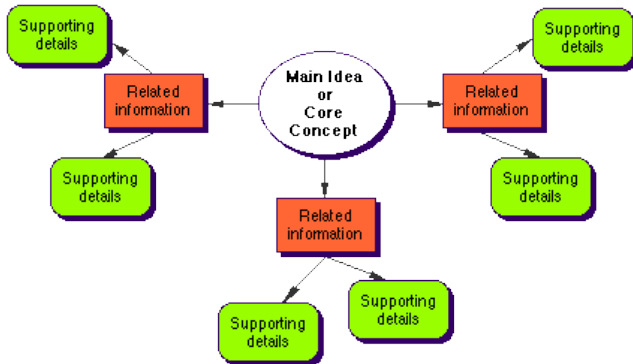
- 1) **Use a binder of loose-leaf paper rather than a spiral-bound notebook.**  
Using loose-leaf paper will allow you to rearrange your notes and replace them when they are rewritten or reorganized. Using a binder will allow you to keep your class handouts and print-offs together with your notes and to have a well-organized notebook. You can also use tabs so that you have all of your classes in one notebook and are never without something to study.
- 2) **Take notes on only one side of the paper.**  
Using only one side of the paper allows you to spread out your notes and see them all at once.
- 3) **Date, number, and title your notes.**  
This will help you find information more quickly later when you need it. Use your title to summarize the main topic of the lecture.
- 4) **Focus on facts, ideas, and specific examples rather than writing every word.**  
Ideas are especially important in literature, philosophy, and history classes, so be sure to record more than just facts.
- 5) **Listen carefully from the beginning of class to the end.**  
Instead of closing your notebook early and getting ready to leave, listen carefully to information given towards the end of class; summary statements may be of particular value in highlighting main points.
- 6) **Set goals when you have trouble taking notes.**  
Divide your page into five sections and try to fill each part every ten minutes (or work out your own formula).
- 7) **Relax.**  
If your instructor has an accent you find hard to understand or has mannerisms you find distracting, relax and focus even more carefully on the content of the lecture.
- 8) **Review your notes during your next free period.**  
Read your notes, fill in any gaps in the information, rewrite any illegible words, and write questions where you didn't understand something. If you are using the Cornell method, write a brief summary of what was covered in the class. Make note of your ideas and reflections; keep them separate from the speaker's.

## Some Note-Taking Methods

### Cornell Method

Key Terms	Notes
Potential Test Questions	Skip a line when a new topic is introduced.
Formulas/Equations	Leave blanks for information you need to fill in later.
	Test yourself by covering the right side of the page.
	Structure your notes with bullets, indentations, underlining, highlighting, etc.
Short (2-3 sentence) summary	

### Mapping

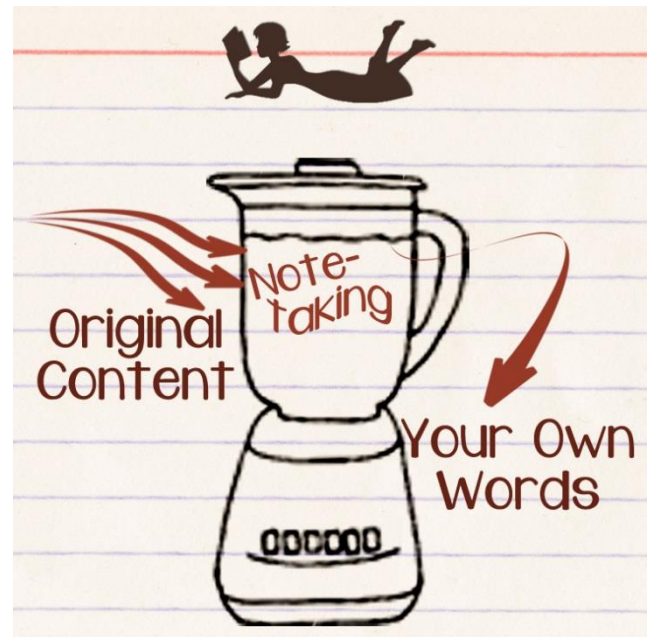


### Charting

Mammal	Habitat	What They Eat	How They Give Birth

## The 5 Rs of Note Taking

<b>Record</b>	During the lecture, write all meaningful information legibly.
<b>Reduce</b>	After the lecture, write a summary of the ideas and facts using key words as cue words.
<b>Recite</b>	Recite all the information in your own words without looking at your notes or the text.
<b>Reflect</b>	Think about your own opinions and ideas. Record questions and original ideas.
<b>Review</b>	Before reading new material, take 10 minutes to review your older notes. Skim over the main ideas and details.



## Resources

“College Note Taking: Another Academic Success Key!”  
Utah State University. Academic Resource Center.

“Concept Mapping.” Goalbook Toolkit. Web.

Pauk, Walter. “The Cornell Notetaking System: Seven Steps to Taking Useful Lecture Notes.” Clearwater, FL: H&H Publishing, 2000.

-----, *How to Study in College*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

# Note-Taking Strategies Inventory

Which of these strategies do you practice?

	Strategies	Often	Sometimes	Rarely or never	Need more information
<i>Before Class</i>	Skim notes from the previous class				
	Preview or read corresponding reading assignments				
	Obtain online notes				
	Get supplies (notebook, laptop, pens, books)				
<i>During Class</i>	Sit where you readily can see and hear				
	Listen selectively; focus on ideas, not words				
	Write/type the ideas; use phrases & abbrev.				
	Add information to online notes				
	Ask questions; participate in class				
	Leave plenty of open spaces in your notes to add information later				
	Listen for summary statements				
<i>After Class</i>	Go back over notes soon after class				
	Organize and clarify notes				
	Clear up questions by asking the teacher or classmates				
	Add related information from text				
	Create potential test questions				
	Review weekly				
	Recite aloud				

## Implementing New Note-Taking Strategies

- Complete the inventory above. If you are unclear about the strategy and need more explanation, place a check in the last column.
- Examine the results of the inventory and reflect on how you might improve your note taking. Choose one strategy that you want to implement for a specific course. Develop and apply a personal goal regarding your use of the strategy, adhering to the SMART goal system:
  - Be specific.
  - Be realistic.
  - Have a time constraint.
  - Write it down. (*I will* \_\_\_\_\_.)
  - Say it out loud.
  - Afterward, evaluate your success.
  - Share with another person.
- After implementing your goal, assess its effectiveness. Consider whether you will continue to use your chosen strategy. Also, think about other methods that you can implement to increase the meaningfulness of your in-class notes.