

Note Taking Strategies

One skill that students and teachers often rely upon in college courses is the ability to take detailed notes from a lecture or chapter of a textbook. Being able to comprehend the information and write it down in your own words not only helps you remember the information better, it also helps you to understand and identify any possible questions you may want to ask your teacher.

Taking notes in class

- Sit close to the front of the class to minimize distraction, especially if you find you have a hard time concentrating or staying on task.
- Keep the notes for each class separate and organized; use a separate notebook for each class or use dividers in your binder to make a new section for each subject.
- Begin each class on a new sheet and put the date and subject at the top of the page.
- Don't try to write down everything the teacher says. Instead, try to record as many facts and ideas as you can. Mark important ideas by underlining or putting a star next to them in the margin. If you can't keep up with the pace that the teacher sets in his or her lecture, don't panic. Just try to write down the main idea, and why it is significant.
- Write clearly and leave plenty of blank space in the margin to add ideas or information later.
- Read over your notes as soon as you can after class and add any additional information that you can remember.
- If there are any points you don't understand, mark them to ask your teacher during the next class session.

Taking notes from textbooks

- Start each section or chapter on a fresh page. At the top of the page, write the date and the section or chapter you're working on.
- Keep your textbook notes separate from your class notes.
- Get a general idea of what the reading is about.
 - Read the introduction, headings and subheadings, and look for paragraphs that summarize the content.
 - Look carefully at any illustrations or graphs and read the captions.
 - Go back and read the section carefully, and look for the main ideas.
- Don't copy information word for word from the text. Instead, try to summarize and put the information in your own words. This helps you understand and remember what you're reading.
- Summarize the main ideas at the end of your notes and underline or circle them so you can quickly find them later.

Don't forget: If you have any questions from the lecture or your reading, ask your teacher during the next class period.

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