

Note-Taking: Taking Lecture Notes

Use your Pen

1. Lecture notes should be as specific and concrete as possible. Be precise about the lecturer's key ideas. It makes them easier to understand, remember and apply.
2. Take selective notes. Don't try to copy information verbatim. Write down ideas from the lectures that are most salient. If you get stuck or desperate, write down single cue words to help remind you of the topic, then go back and fill in your blanks later.
3. Focus on lecture information that ties together or explains important themes. Compare and contrast to find relationships and to create "mental filing systems" to organize information.

Use your Ears

1. Develop the intention to learn while you are in a lecture. You've made the effort and taken the time to come to the lecture. Make the most of your time by learning the information as you receive it. The more information you understand, the less you'll have to memorize.
2. Listen for clues to what is important information in the lecture.

Use your Body

1. Get involved in the ideas and information being presented. Rather than thinking of yourself as "attending" (in the passive sense) a lecture, think in terms of "participating in" the lecture (the way you would participate in a conversation.)
2. Sit up front to hear better, see better, avoid distractions.
3. Compare notes with fellow students to get their strategies for good note-taking.

Use your Mind

1. Take a minute before class to anticipate what the instructor is likely to present based on:
 - The syllabus
 - What has been presented in the course thus far
 - A quick review of your notes from the last lecture
 - A quick glance at the readings assigned for the current class
2. What is the relationship between information presented in lecture and information presented in the readings, in section, in the written work, in the problems assigned?
3. Anticipate the ways you may be tested on material presented in lecture. Give yourself a pre-test to help you identify areas of strength and diagnose areas of weakness.