Taking Notes  
(and getting the most out of them)

Before class

Complete the assigned reading/project before coming to class.

If available, print and review PowerPoint slides before coming to class.

Where you sit is important:
Position yourself in the front and center of the classroom.

Review notes from previous class before the instructor begins.
• What were the main points?
• How do the notes connect to today’s lecture?

Have the right materials ready before class begins:
• Good pen/pencil
• Notebook/folder devoted to the subject
• Clean notepaper

Why Take Notes?
It helps you concentrate in class
Your notes are often a source of valuable clues for what information the instructor thinks most important
Your notes often contain information that cannot be found elsewhere

Different Notetaking Methods

Cornell Method

Reading & Lecture Notes Together

TIP: A professor is about to make a main point when (s)he:
• Pauses before or after an idea
• Uses repetition to emphasize a point
• Uses introductory phrases to precede an important idea
• Writes an idea on the board

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**Notes are worthless unless you review them!**

**Review** your notes within 24 hours to move the information from short-term memory to long-term memory. The best time to review is after the class. Take **10 minutes** to glance over your notes and clarify any unclear points, fill in abbreviations, etc.

**Create a mind map of your notes**

For some students, **recopying** their notes is the best method of review. Try it!

For other students, **typing** their notes works great.

Incorporate PowerPoint slides into your recopied notes.

Once a week, review all of your notes from the entire week. This review should be longer, at least 30 minutes. By doing a **weekly review**, you won’t have to spend as much time studying when exams come around.

**Other notes on notes:**

**Label** (course title/number/lecture topic) and **date** all of your notes.

**Use standard abbreviations** when taking notes.

For example:
- **Ex** = example
- **B/c** = because
- **Btw** = between
- **W/** = with

**Graphic symbols** are also great for notes, such as: *
- **( )**
- **[ ]**
- + , = , # , @

**Be aware of a wandering mind!**

If you notice you are starting to daydream and are not paying attention to the instructor, refocus. Concentrate on your handwriting. Stretch your legs.

*Notetaking is not just a school activity: In the “real world” you’ll take notes during meetings and as you work. If you learn how to do it well, you will succeed both in college and in your career!*