



Note Taking Tips

(Using the “GREAT” notes method)

GREAT Notes =

Get ready
wRite
Edit
Ask questions
Test yourself

Get Ready Phase: Set the stage

- Complete all written homework assignments
- Complete all reading homework assignments
- Bring the right materials
- Browse notes prior to class, anticipate a “pop” quiz
- Sit front and center
- Prepare yourself to be focused

wRite Phase: Note taking

- Include key information
Ex. main ideas, facts, details, examples & definitions
- Listen for instructor’s cues of importance, ex. repetition, enthusiasm
- Use abbreviations and symbols
- Write only on the front side of the paper
- Try the Cornell, outline, and/or mind map formats (see examples)

Edit Phase: Make notes useable

- Clean up after class, ex. check spelling
- Fill in the gaps
- Maximize your chosen note taking strategy
- Use the back side of the paper
 - Vocabulary words
 - Make up your own examples
 - Draw charts, pictures, diagrams
 - Add new notes from your textbook
 - Write down questions for your instructor

Ask Questions Phase: Put yourself in an instructor role

- Design sample test questions
- Change passive learning to active learning

Test Yourself Phase: Move info to long term memory

- Can only be done if/after questions are made
- Read the questions and recite your answers aloud

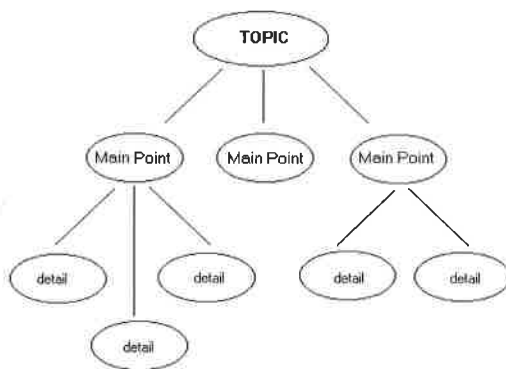
Cornell Method example:

Cue Column – 1/3 portion of the page	Today's Date, Instructor Name, Class, Topic(s), Your Name
Main ideas here – Insert after lecture	All notes go here during class lecture – 2/3 portion of the page
Summary section:	Create sample test questions here

Outline example:

- I. First main topic
 - A. Subtopic
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail
 - B. Subtopic
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail
- II. Second main topic
 - A. Subtopic
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail
 - B. Subtopic
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail

Mind Map examples:



Miscellaneous Tips:

- Use a three-ring binder so you can add handouts
- Create flash cards from 3x5 note cards
- Label your notes
- Copy down information from the white/chalk board or overhead
- Leave blank spaces (if you use both sides of your paper)
- Use graphics for parts of your notes that you need to focus on (ex. ?)
- Use graphics for parts of your notes that you totally know (ex. □)
- Take notes in pencil so you can erase easily
- Try highlighting, but use sparingly
- Type up your notes (or a summary page) on the computer
- Notice your wandering mind, it's ok, just refocus
- Participate in class discussions
- Relate the class and your notes to your ultimate goals
- "Be" with the instructor with eye contact, good posture, etc.
- Sit in a class room location with minimal distractions
- Compare notes with a classmate, if possible, right after class
- Experiment with formats and use what works for you
- Use a tape recorder and FYI to your instructor as a courtesy
- **ASK YOUR INSTRUCTOR FOR CLARIFICATION!!**

Adjusting to Different Lecture Styles:

"Talking over your Head" – When difficult concepts are not thoroughly explained.

- **Strategy:** Ask questions (lots if necessary!)

"Rambling" – When the presentation consistently goes off track from the topic at hand.

- **Strategy:** Ask carefully worded questions related to the last main point.

"Mumbling" – When the instructor speaks too softly or does not enunciate well.

- **Strategy:** Sit up front, listen closely, and ask to repeat main points.

"Tortoise and Hare" – When the instructor speaks too slowly or too quickly.

- **Strategy (tortoise):** Ask to repeat or clarify the main points.
- **Strategy (hare):** Anticipate what is to come, abbreviate, and make connections between concepts. Try not to stress out!

**** Comparing notes with a classmate AND communicating with your instructor are two good strategies for all of the above!**



Connect to Success Office

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