



Note Taking Tips

As you get involved with the complexities of note taking, you may tend to forget the simple things that can make student life a lot easier. These tips are little hints that we all know but forget sometimes. They can be summarized by four directives:

1. **BE ALERT** – so you are aware of and prepared for the lecture content and situation.
2. **BE ORDERLY** – so you can process the lecture now and for review later.
3. **BE SYTEMATIC** – so you can establish a habit pattern and won't miss anything important.
4. **BE UP TO DATE** – so that your well designed note taking system gets done.

Tips of the trade:

- Attend lectures regularly. Once you miss one, it will be easier to miss more.
- Keep the notes for one class separate from other classes. Keep each class in a separate binder or in an electronic folder on your computer.
- Carry extra pens and pencils for editing and unforeseen complications.
- Make notes as complete as needed and as clear as possible so they can be used meaningfully later.
- Mark with a star or * where information is missed or misunderstood. Fill in gaps after lecture or as soon after as possible with the aid of the instructor or classmates.
- Develop your own system of numbering and indenting.
- Use symbols such as asterisks for emphasis.
- Separate your thoughts from those of the lecture; record your own items after the lecture.
- Be alert for lecture cues, postural, visual, etc.
- Record examples when helpful; story time is not the time to tune out.
- Listen especially at the end of the lecture. If the instructor has not paced his/her lecture well, he/she may cram half of the content into the last 5 – 10 minutes.
- Get into the 10 minute routine and review your notes right after class. At this time you can change, organize, add, delete, summarize, or clarify misunderstands.
- Recopying notes by itself is not necessarily a good use of your time, but reviewing for 5-10 minutes following class is an effective use.
- Have study sessions once or twice a week to learn omissions, clear up misinterpretations and get other students opinions about interpretations.