



Top 10+ Tips to Effective Note Taking

A Study Guide to taking effect notes in class

Why is smart note taking important and how will it help you be more successful in school?

- Forces to listen more effectively and key in on important information
- Provides a foundation for review
- Personal points are often more helpful than pre-printed handouts

1. **Attend all classes**...if you aren't there, you can't hear what you missed
2. **Read chapters before class begins**...this will provide a good foundation for the lecture and for catching what the instructor feels is important.
3. **Sit close to the front of the room**...there is less chance of falling asleep and better chance of seeing and hearing the instructor.
4. **Copy everything the instructor puts on the board**...this is a sure sign they find it important.
5. **Write short phrases**...note taking is not transcription, every word is not important, key words and phrases are.
6. **Use your own words**...if you use only the instructors words and don't understand them, the notes are worthless. Using your own words increases retention.
7. **Write the name of the course, the date of the lecture and instructors name down**...that way if you have a question later, you can reference it to the instructor.
8. **Catch the signal words**...if instructor says "the first point is..." or "an important point to remember is...", get that written down. Didn't catch it? Ask questions now!
9. **Review notes as soon as possible after class**...make sure they are readable and understandable. Get back to the instructor soon after if something doesn't make sense and don't forget to **review notes often**.
10. **Keep notes for each class organized separately**...use a separate notebook or binder for each class. The fewer opportunities for loss or confusion, the better the chance to notes will help you study.
11. **Leave blank spaces between thoughts**...this will allow you to add additional thoughts when you have more time.
12. **Listen attentively**...think about the instructor is talking about before writing if possible, but don't get behind.
13. **Review the Cornell System**...of note-taking for style. Record, Question, Recite, Reflect, Review.

That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way.

-- Doris Lessing