

Note Taking Tips

Date your notes

Keep an organized system so you can easily go back and review. Leave space on each page to add details later.

Develop your own shorthand

You can't write everything down, so learn to write the key terms and headline information. Use phrases rather than complete sentences. You aren't graded on your grammar; so don't take the extra time to construct perfect sentences.

Draw and use symbols

Feel free to use symbols, icons and drawings if it helps. For some people, drawing is a great way to retain information. Similarly, highlighters and different ink colors can also help you separate information.

Don't write everything down

The most important ideas will likely be repeated. Most teachers will structure their lectures with important ideas first followed by supporting information, similar to how you construct a paragraph. The most important or main idea is the topic sentence. Learn to distinguish between the main ideas and the details.

Know your teacher

Pay attention to what your teacher considers important. Not everything discussed in class or read in the textbook will be on the test. Some teachers will only test on the class notes and lectures. Others will test on the information in the textbook, so knowing what your teacher likes to test on will help considerably.

Review your notes later the same day

Summarizing and reviewing your notes soon after taking them helps you retain the information. Ideally, you would review your notes several times before the test so you don't have to cram. Cramming the night before the test should be a last resort. You'll be much better off if you plan ahead and study for 10-20 minutes each night rather than for four hours the night before.

Practice

Knowing how to study, how you will retain information and what information you write down involves trial and error. You will also find that there are a number of note taking templates to help you get organized. Try different types to find what works best for you. Here is a list of several popular note pages to get you started.

<http://freeology.com/tag/note-taking>

