

NOTE-TAKING IN CLASS

Note-taking can help you become an active class participant who will better remember important class information for quizzes and tests. This skill includes class preparation, class involvement and after-class review.

Be Prepared

- Effective note-taking should begin **before** class starts. Remember to bring a pen or a pencil, lots of paper (i.e., loose-leaf, spiral notebooks), a highlighter, and a positive attitude.
- Before class, know the topic of the lecture or discussion.
- Look over your notes from the previous day to familiarize yourself with the topic being discussed.
- If you are starting a new unit, look up any unfamiliar terms that will be discussed in class so that you will have a knowledge base to build on.

Look, Listen and Write

- Look for any notes on the board.
- Listen for key concepts the professor stresses or repeats, and write them down. Listen for organizational words such as the following:
 - “Three major elements”
 - “An important factor”
 - “In summary”
 - “The most ... the least”
- Copy down anything that the professor writes; watch for key terms.
- If you are confused about something the professor writes or says, ask him or her to clarify the term or concept.

Remember that you do not have to write everything the teacher says. It is more important to write down general concepts or key words. Sometimes you will have to make judgment calls on what information is important and what is not. When in doubt, write it down.

Abbreviate

Write down only the useful and important information, meaning that you should learn to condense the lecture in your notes.

- Abbreviate sentences and words whenever possible. For example, in a discussion about Darwin, write *Darwin* at first mention in your notes, and then use *D* at every mention of his name afterwards.
- Use symbols in place of words, developing your own code.
- Leave out vowels when possible ... **Lve out vowels whn pssble.**

Review and Clarify

After class, take time to review key concepts and make sure that you understand the information. If your notes are unclear or unorganized, it is sometimes helpful to rewrite or type out your notes. It is much easier to study notes that you understand. Reviewing and clarifying should help you understand and retain more of the information that was discussed in class.

Following are some helpful note-taking tips:

- Sit where you can see and hear (in the front).
- Date notes and number pages.
- Keep notes organized; categorize with indentation and spacing.
- Space out notes to leave room for additional material.
- Use post-it notes to summarize and index your notes.
- Do not follow a formal outline.
- Tape record if necessary.

The Cornell Note-Taking Method: Sample Notebook Page

<p>2-1/2"</p> <p>Key Word</p> <p>and</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Column</p> <p>Write down questions and key words to help quiz yourself later.</p>	<p>6" Main Column</p> <p>Write down your instructor's lecture as fully and as meaningfully as possible, especially what's written on the board and repeated. (You'll probably use more than one page.)</p>
<p>2" Summary Area</p> <p>Summarize the notes taken on this page in one or two sentences for review.</p>	