

NOTE-TAKING

Note taking is an important and extremely critical study skill that many students need to develop, especially during their first year of school. Here are some pointers that can help you retain more information.

Note taking can be broken down into a **Three-Phase System**. There are before, during and after phases where note taking is concerned, and this handout will help you make efficient use of all three phases.

BEFORE PHASE

Before you go to class to take notes, there are some tips to make lecture more effective:

- **DO THE ASSIGNED READING**
 - Professors aren't the only ones who have to prepare for class – you need to as well! Reading before going to class will help clarify points presented in lecture.
- **Write down questions about the reading**
 - Professors usually leave time for your questions, and asking questions can even improve your grade! This is because most professors have a portion of the grade set aside for participation, and asking questions shows active interest and participation in the class.

DURING PHASE

Once you are in class, ready to take notes, remember these key points:

- **Do not try to write down everything the lecturer says!**
 - This is nearly impossible to do, and is an inefficient use of time and energy. Instead, pick out key points in the lecture and write those down instead.
- **Use abbreviations**
 - Sometimes it is too hard to try and write down full words, so abbreviate whenever possible.
- **Listen carefully!**
 - You need to listen carefully to what is said so that you can pick up on those key points we mentioned earlier. Active listening is always preferable to passive listening
- **Write questions about things you do not understand**
 - If there is something you don't understand, write it down and ask the professor during class, or after class, if time runs out. These questions can also serve as a useful study tool when reviewing for a future test.
- **If the professor posts an outline, COPY IT DOWN**
 - Usually, if the professor puts up an outline, it will contain the main points of his/her lecture and will save you from having to write more later. This will also help you to study for tests and quizzes that you may have over the information presented.

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AFTER PHASE

There are some things you can do after class to make sure that everything “sticks”:

- **Review**
 - Reviewing your notes in those last few minutes of class can help you not only see what you have just learned, but *can also help you retain* what you have just learned a little better. In addition, reviewing your notes before the next class can help you prepare for that class by reminding you of important topics discussed, and any questions you may have had.
- **Recall**
 - Recall what you have learned. Look at the questions you have written down and try to answer them without looking at your notes. This will help jog your memory and *improve retention*.
- **Recite**
 - It sounds silly to read out loud to yourself, but it is actually a valuable study tool for *helping you retain* what you have learned. It has been proven that students retain information better if it has been presented to them in *multiple sensor modalities*. You have heard and seen the lecture once, and written down the notes. Now it is your job to review what you have written and heard. Read your notes to yourself out loud. Hearing the lecture again will help you retain the information.

Using the Three-Phase System will help you improve information retention, and will hopefully serve as a useful study tool

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<http://studentsuccess.louisiana.edu/tutoringresources>