Taking Notes
(and getting the most out of them)

Before class

Complete the assigned reading/project before coming to class.
If available, print and review PowerPoint slides before coming to class.
Where you sit is important: Position yourself in the front and center of the classroom (the “T-zone”).

Review notes from previous class before the instructor begins.
What were the main points?
How do the notes connect to today’s lecture?
Have the right materials ready before class begins:
Good pen/ pencil
Notebook/folder devoted to the subject
Clean notepaper

WHY TAKE NOTES?
It helps you to concentrate in class.
Your notes are often a source of valuable clues for what information the instructor thinks is most important.
Your notes often contain information that cannot be found elsewhere.

Different Note-taking Methods

Cornell Method

Reading & Lecture Notes Together

**Cue Column**

| Take notes here during class. |
| Summary Area |

**Reading Notes**
Prior to class, take notes on your reading on one page.

**Class Notes**
During class, take notes from the lecture on the back of those pages.

Combined, you will have notes from your reading and lectures in one place!

**TIP: A professor is about to make a main point when (s)he:**
Pauses before or after an idea
Uses introductory phrases to precede an important idea

Uses repetition to emphasize a point
Writes an idea on the board

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Cornell Method

Cue Column: Questions, Connections, etc.
Summary Area: Condense page to 1-2 sentences

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Review Your Notes!

**Review** your notes within 24 hours to move the information from short-term memory to long-term memory.

The best time to review is after the class. Take **10 minutes** to glance over your notes and clarify any unclear points, fill in abbreviations, etc.

Create a mind map of your notes

For some students, **recopying** their notes is the best method of review. Try it!

For other students, **typing** their notes works great.

Incorporate PowerPoint slides into your recopied notes.

Once a week, review all of your notes from the entire week. This review should be longer, at least 30 minutes. By doing a **weekly review**, you won’t have to spend as much time studying when exams come around.

Other notes on notes:

**Label** (course title/number/lecture topic) and **date** all of your notes.

**Graphic symbols** are also great for notes.

For example:

- *, ( ), [ ], +, =, #, @

**Use standard abbreviations** when taking notes.

For example:

- Ex = example
- B/c = because
- Btw = between
- W/ = with

Be aware of a wandering mind!

If you notice you are starting to daydream and are not paying attention to the instructor, refocus. Concentrate on your handwriting. Stretch your legs.