

Note Taking & Listening

Taking notes in class has many benefits and sets the stage for academic success. It helps to consolidate your learning by involving multiple senses, such as hearing the instructor, seeing the information, and tapping into the tactile sense of actually recording your notes on a piece of paper. Also, being able to express your thoughts into writing in your lecture notes, on tests, or on essays is essential to success at university. Your notes make a permanent record of what you are trying to learn so they are a very valuable resource.

In order to be an effective note taker you need to be an active listener in your lectures. Passive listening occurs when you exert little effort and are minimally involved in the lecture; you are hearing the words but do not completely understand their meaning. When you practice active listening you focus on, attend to, and think about what is being

Recite and Reflect. During your regular review sessions you will be trying to learn and memorize the class material. The two steps to this process are called reciting and reflecting. Reciting means recalling (out loud, preferably) the information you want to memorize/understand. Simply cover up the notes column and ask yourself the questions you generated in the key column. When trying to really understand class material, you need to reflect upon it think about and try to understand the material in your own words. How does this particular lecture relate to the main themes of the course? How does this material relate to material from the last lecture?

Recapitulate and Review The recapitulation step involves writing short summaries of each page of your lecture notes in your own words. When you put something into your own words, it becomes more meaningful and learning is enhanced. Review sessions are very important. It is during these sessions that you long-term memory ready to be retrieved during exams.

Self-Assessment Exercise

		Yes	No
1.	I take notes in class, whenever the professor is lecturing.		
2.	When I am taking notes, I am able to keep up with my professor, or I ask him/her to repeat the material.		
3.	I am able to identify the main points in a lecture and to record them in my notes.		
4.	Before I write my notes, I think about what the instructor has said and then put the material in my own words.		