LECTURE NOTE TAKING

Note taking is a vital skill in college. It is a must if you expect to learn from lectures. Note taking helps you to learn to remember and recall information. Without some kind of aide, forgetting occurs quickly. To remember and store information in the long term memory, TAKE NOTES, STUDY YOUR NOTES, AND RECITE YOUR NOTES!

I. NOTE TAKING SKILLS

a. Keep a written record of lectures that includes a date and topic.
b. Regular attendance is a must—sit in the front where you can see, hear, and be seen by the lecturer.
c. You must be an active listener.
d. Be flexible, use different styles of note taking to adjust to the organizational patterns of each topic or lecturer.
e. Resist distractions.
f. Read assignments before class lecture—or at least preview the material to make yourself familiar with it.
g. Make notes concise. Don’t write every word the instructor says.
h. Use full size paper—divide the paper vertically in 1/3 and 2/3 columns; this creates a large left hand margin that allows you free space to add notes if desired. Take notes on only one side of the paper, never the reverse side.
i. Write legibly.
j. Abbreviate key words and common words like: AND, WITH and FOR EXAMPLE, to save time—use a KEY at the top of the page for abbreviated words.
k. Leave some blank spaces for items or ideas you missed.
l. Ask questions in class.
m. Take notes during class discussions. Many valuable ideas may arise during informal discussions, ideas that your instructor may not present formally later on.
n. Take notes up to the end of class.
o. To fill in voids in your note taking, refer back to your textbook or obtain notes from a classmate.
II. LISTENING SKILLS
It is the primary means of acquiring information from lectures. There is a difference between hearing and listening.
   a. Hearing is passive.
      i. Hearing is a spontaneous act.
      ii. Sound waves received by the ear must be more than just physically present during lecture.
   b. Listening is active—it is something you choose to do. It requires the use of the ears for hearing and the brain for comprehending. The absorption of meaning requires three activities:
      i. Listening to absorb requires Concentration, an activity involving processing and interpretation of incoming information.
      ii. Listening to absorb requires paying attention, you must be intentional, purposeful, and deliberate.
      iii. Listening to absorb requires dynamic listening where you focus on the content, not the delivery. Focus on ideas not just facts. Listen for central themes. Listen for the lecturer’s remarks and organizational pattern.

III. WRITE LEGIBLY
   a. Practice speed-writing by writing non-stop for 10 min. Write whatever comes into your head. Try this several times until you have increased the amount you have written in 10 min.
   b. Avoid unnecessary high and low loops to streamline your hand writing.
   c. Use a print-style writing to help you write faster.

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IV. USE SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

a. Omit “a”, “and”, “the” and “connecting words”
b. Make a key at the top of the notes to represent abbreviations used.
c. Use symbols and abbreviations to save time.

For Example:

\[\rightarrow\rightarrow\] - conflict, opposed
\%
\+ - in addition to, plus, moreover
\- - less, minus
\rightarrow - leads to, causes
\text{-paragraph}
\text{Rx} - prescription, remedy, solution
\text{1\textsuperscript{st}} - first
\text{2\textsuperscript{nd}} - second
\therefore - therefore
\text{w} - with
\text{w/o} - without
\text{c/o} - care of
\text{?} - question, questionable
\text{>} - greater than, more important than
\text{<} - less than, of minor importance
\text{T} - theme, topic
\text{=} - equals, means
\checkmark - check over
\text{★} - important
\text{at}
\text{I, II, III} - main ideas
\text{Vs} - versus, against
\uparrow - rising up, increase
\Downarrow - parallel
\text{lb.} - pound
\text{chem.} - chemistry
\text{a.m.} - day, morning
\text{p.} - page
\text{pp.} - pages
\text{p.m.} - evening, night
\text{avail.} - available
\text{imp.} - important
\text{misc.} - miscellaneous
\text{etc.} - et cetera
\text{D.C.} - discontinued
\text{Cont.} - contrast
\text{mfg.} - manufacturing
\text{pres.} - president
\text{adj.} - adjective
V. SIGNALS TO WATCH FOR WHEN ACTIVELY LISTENING TO LECTURER

a. Write down what the TEACHER PUTS ON BOARD. PRINT the material in capital letters or mark “OB”. If it was important enough to put on the board, you will need to know it.

b. Write down DEFINITIONS, rather than “see page 266.” Listen for enumeration words like “the four steps…” then number and list them in order.

c. Listen for, “THIS IS IMPORTANT,” or “A point that will keep coming up later…,” The Chief cause was…,” or “the basic idea is…,” “pay special attention to…,” BE SURE TO WRITE THE IMPORTANT STATEMENT DOWN AND WRITE IN THE MARGIN, “IMP” or mark (*) to show its importance.

d. Listen for points that are REPEATED, you can usually assume it is important. Write “R” for repeated in the margin so that you will know later that the instructor stressed that idea.

e. Listen to the INSTRUCTOR’S VOICE: If it slows down, becomes louder, or otherwise signals that you are expected to write down exactly what is being said, word for word.

f. Watch for NONVERBAL CUES. The instructor may walk toward their audience or may pace as they stress an essential concept or may tap on the desk or use their hands to make a point.

g. Take notes when the instructor refers to specific material in the text. If the instructor makes reference to a point, you can be assured of its importance.

Research has proven that without some kind of aide, in 48 hours you will forget 25% of the lecture, in two week 80% of the information and at four weeks, you will have retained only 5% of the data. To remember and store information in long term memory, TAKE NOTES, STUDY NOTES AND RECITE THEM.