

SELF-REFLECTION

Answer these questions. Are you happy with your answers, or would you like to make some changes?

- How do you organize your notes (by date or topic)?
- Do you use a specific note-taking method such as Cornell, outlining, or mind mapping?
- Are you able to identify your instructor's main points?
- Do you take beautiful, well-organized notes and then never review them?
- What strategies and techniques could you use to make your notes more useful?
- How do you use your notes to help you prepare for exams?
- Do you ever ask your instructor or a classmate for help if your notes are missing some important material from a lecture?

TIPS

- Use your favourite pen/pencil to take notes. The writing utensil you choose should be enjoyable to use!
- If you'd like to take notes on your laptop or other device, check with your instructor first.
- Use a separate notebook for each subject.
- Label your notes for each class with the date and topic of the lecture.
- Don't try to write down everything your instructor says. Note taking is not transcription!
- Keep track of key words. Be sure to write down any new terms or specialized vocabulary.
- Review your notes frequently and make it part of your regular exam prep.
- Use abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, and phrases instead of complete sentences to help speed up your writing.
- A note-taking method that works well for one class might not work for another. Try different methods and be flexible.

Note Taking



Note Taking Strategies

Prepare beforehand:

- Review your notes and other materials from the last class.
- Preview material for the upcoming lecture.
- Complete the assigned reading.
- Make connections between the previous lecture and the new material.
- Arrive on time.
- Be well rested, fed, and alert.

Stay engaged:

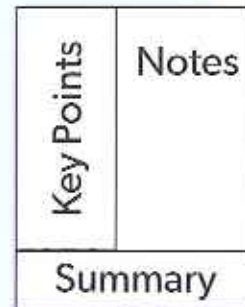
- Sit near the front of the class.
- Use active listening skills.
- Use an effective note-taking method that matches the course content and instructor's style.
- Consider recording the lecture (with permission).

Follow up afterwards:

- Review your notes right after class (and frequently).
- Check with a classmate or instructor to fill in any gaps.

Try out these methods.

Key Points/Summary (Cornell)



Divide your note pages into 3 sections as shown above.

- Notes: Take notes during class.
- Key points: Add main ideas, key points, dates, people, etc. as soon as possible after class.
- Summary: Summarize the main ideas as soon as possible after adding key points.

Outline

- I. First main point
 - A. Subtopic
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail
 - B. Subtopic

This method is similar to doing an outline for a paper, but the main points, subtopics, and details come from the lecture.

- Organize your notes by main points and supporting ideas.
- Use roman numerals or bullets in your outline and take notes within that structure.
- Leave space between main points in case your instructor returns to the topic again.

Mind Map



This method helps you visualize connections between key points. You've probably used something similar to help you think of ideas for a paper.

- Write the central point of the lecture in the middle.
- Draw branches and label each important main point.
- Draw smaller branches and add details.