

NOTE-TAKING EVALUATION AND STRATEGIES

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/makinggrade/notetaking.html>

The material for the note-taking section was taken and partly adapted from *Improving Your Reading And Study Skills* by Patricia Glenn Cowan, Ph.D., *How to Study in College* by Walter Pauk, *Biology* by Martha Taylor and, and *Integrating College Study Skills* by Elias Sotiriou. The section on *Principles of Learning and Recall* were adapted from a document produced by the Univ. of Kentucky Learning Skills Program

Legend: *A=Always, F=Frequently, N=Never/Rarely*

PRE-CLASS NOTE-TAKING EXERCISE:

1.	Before class, I read or skim the textbook pages that relate to the lecture topic.	A	F	N
2.	I make note of questions that occur to me as I read or skim relevant material.	A	F	N
3.	I familiarize myself with important terms.	A	F	N
4.	I complete readings and written assignments when they are due.	A	F	N
5.	I review my notes from the previous session.	A	F	N
6.	I come to class on time with all materials I need.	A	F	N
7.	I take a seat near the front, away from distractions.	A	F	N
8.	I assume my responsibilities as a student and recognize those of the instructor.	A	F	N

Scoring

If you circled **A** for all eight statements, your pre-class note-taking processes are in decent shape. If you circled **N** for more than four statements, you think you could improve your skills. If you circled **F** for more than four statements, your skills may need just a little polishing.

Writing Your Plans for Improving

In activity A, notice the statements for which you circled **N** (sometimes or never). Rewrite these statements as goals. For example:

GOAL: I'll make a habit of reading or skimming the textbook pages that relate to lectures before class.

Write reminders on your calendar to read certain chapters before class. Make time for reading your notes from the previous lecture.

DURING CLASS NOTE-TAKING EXERCISE:

1.	I listen carefully to the instructor	A	F	N
2.	If my mind wanders during a lecture, I'm able to refocus my attention on the instructor.	A	F	N
3.	I listen not just for facts but for ideas and connections between ideas.	A	F	N
4.	Rather than prejudge the material or the instructor and tune out, I encourage myself to stay focused on the lecture.	A	F	N
5.	I concentrate my attention on the instructor, picking up both verbal and nonverbal clues.	A	F	N
6.	When I get lost or confused during a lecture, I continue to make an effort to reconnect with the instructor's train of thought.	A	F	N
7.	I avoid letting my own thoughts or feelings interfere with my ability to listen.	A	F	N
8.	I ask or write questions in my notes when I don't understand something.	A	F	N
9.	As I take notes, I make an effort to distinguish the speaker's main ideas from secondary ideas and details.	A	F	N
10.	I make my notes accurate by including detailed information and examples that support broad ideas.	A	F	N
11.	My notes are organized to show the speaker's logic and reasoning. For example, I record cause and effect relationships, conclusions, contrasts, and summaries.	A	F	N
12.	My notes include vocabulary words and phrases that are characteristic of the course topic.	A	F	N
13.	When appropriate I use diagrams, graphs, and other visual ways of recording information.	A	F	N
14.	I take notes quickly and neatly enough to record all the facts that I consider important and to make them easy to review.	A	F	N

Scoring

If you circled **A** for eight or more statements, your listening and note-taking skills are in good shape. If you circled **N** for eight or more statements, you believe that your skills need some improvement. If you circled **F** for eight or more statements, your skills may need just a little development or polishing.

Writing Your Plans for Improving

Look at the statements in the inventory for which you gave yourself a rating of **N**. Change these statements into specific personal goals. For example, if you circled **N** for the statement number 4, you might write a goal like this:

PERSONAL GOAL: "I've often been annoyed with my sociology professor's opinions. From now on I'm going to try not to prejudge her or tune out; instead, I will focus on the lecture topic."

After a class, describe how you're progressing toward your goal and why.

AFTER/BETWEEN CLASS NOTE-TAKING EXERCISE:

1.	I review my notes immediately after each lecture or within 24 hours after class.	A	O	R	N
2.	I write key words or phrase-like questions in the margins of my notes.	A	O	R	N
3.	I review my notes every week.	A	O	R	N
4.	I use my notes for self-testing.	A	O	R	N

Scoring

Review the ratings you gave yourself. If most or all of your answers were **A** or **O**, you are already using good after-class strategies regarding your notes. If you answered **R** or **N** to most of the questions, you need to improve the way you use your notes after class.

Writing Your Plans for Improving

Choose one item from the after-class inventory for which you rated yourself "rarely" or "never." Set a goal for improvement in using this strategy. For example, if you "rarely" or "never" write key words and questions in the margins of your notes, set a goal to make your notes more useful by adding marginal notes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NOTE-TAKING:

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/makinggrade/preclassnotes.html>

A System for Effective Listening and Note Taking

BEFORE CLASS

- Develop a mind-set geared toward listening
- Test yourself over the previous lecture while waiting for the next one to begin
- Skim relevant reading assignments to acquaint yourself with main ideas, new technical terms, etc.
- Do what you can to improve physical and mental alertness (fatigue, hunger, time of day, or where you sit in the classroom could affect motivation)
- Choose notebooks that will enhance your systematic note taking: A separate notebook with full-sized pages is recommended for each course.
- Intend to listen.

DURING CLASS

- Listen for the structure and information in the lecture.
- Resist distractions, emotional reactions, or boredom.
- Be consistent in your use of forms, abbreviations, etc.
- Pay attention to speaker for verbal, postural, and visual clues to what's important.
- Label information points and organization clues; main points, examples.
- When possible translate the lecture into your own words, but, if you can't, don't let it worry you into inattention.
- If you feel you don't take enough notes, divide your page into 5 sections and try to fill each part every 10 minutes (or work out your own formula).
- Ask questions if you don't understand
- Instead of closing your notebook early and getting ready to leave, listen carefully to information given toward the end of class; summary statements maybe of particular value in highlighting main points; there may be possible quiz questions, etc.

AFTER CLASS

- Clear up any questions raised by the lecture by asking either the teacher or classmates.
- Fill in missing points or misunderstood terms from text or other sources.
- Edit your notes, labeling main points, adding recall clues and questions to be answered. Key points in the notes can be highlighted with different colors of ink.
- Make note of your ideas and reflections, keeping them separate from those of the speaker.

PERIODICALLY

- Review your notes. Glance at your recall clues and see how much you can remember before rereading the notes.
- Look for the emergence of themes, main concepts, methods of presentations over the course of several lectures. Make up and answer possible test questions.