

Note-Taking Tips & Methods to Improve Your Notes

Note-taking skills are an essential tool for success that you can use in your courses, student organizations, and career. It is one thing to write down information on paper during lectures, but taking quality notes allows you to process and integrate new knowledge, record the information in your own words, and organize the new material. Note-taking is more than just an in class activity. For the most benefit, use your note-taking skills before, during, and after class.

BEFORE CLASS **Review the Text:** This will give you a heads up of the terms, concepts, and information that will most likely be covered in the lecture. It can also give you an idea of how to structure the information.

BEFORE CLASS **Identify Unfamiliar and/or Difficult Content:** If you find certain terms, concepts, or information confusing, you will know to take more specific notes during the lecture. You can also be sure to ask questions so that the instructor can clarify the information.

DURING CLASS **Format Your Notes:** Find a style of note-taking that works best for YOU and the course. This might be using one style or a combination of styles so that your notes are the best resource they can be.

DURING CLASS **Record Examples & the Most Important Information:** Don't worry about recording every word the instructor says or your grammar and spelling. Instead, write down the most important information, main ideas/terms, and examples discussed in class.

AFTER CLASS **Review within 24 Hours:** To minimize forgetting and maximize information retention, review your notes within 24 hours after your class.

AFTER CLASS **Fill in Gaps:** During class, you might not have been able to write down all of the information on a topic or an example you thought of after the lecture— add that information to your notes! This is also a chance to fix any spelling or grammar errors you might have made while quickly recording notes.

AFTER CLASS **Summarize the Information:** At the end of your notes for each class, write a short summary or synopsis to what you learned in class. This will help you focus back on the main ideas of the lecture and can serve as a quick review before your next class to help refresh the content covered.

Other Tips

- You can't take notes if you aren't in class or prepared with pencil and paper.
- Try different note-taking methods (examples on back) before deciding which works best for you and each of your courses.
- Add color, graphics, and charts to personalize your notes and draw attention to the important facts, statistics, and terms.

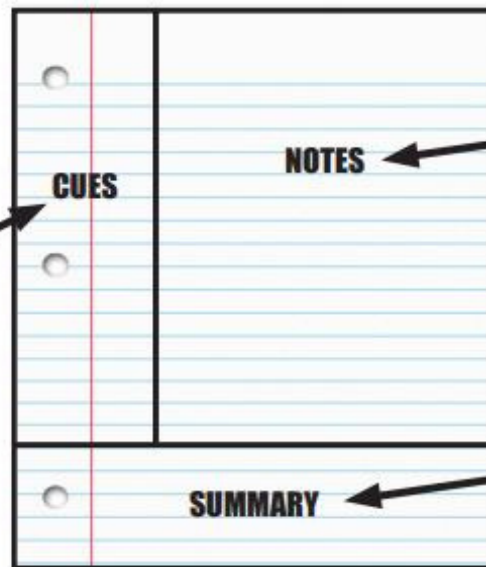
Cornell Method

For:

- Main Ideas
- Questions that connect points
- Diagrams
- Prompts to help you study

When:

- Before class
- During class
- After class



For:

- Recording lecture

When:

- During class

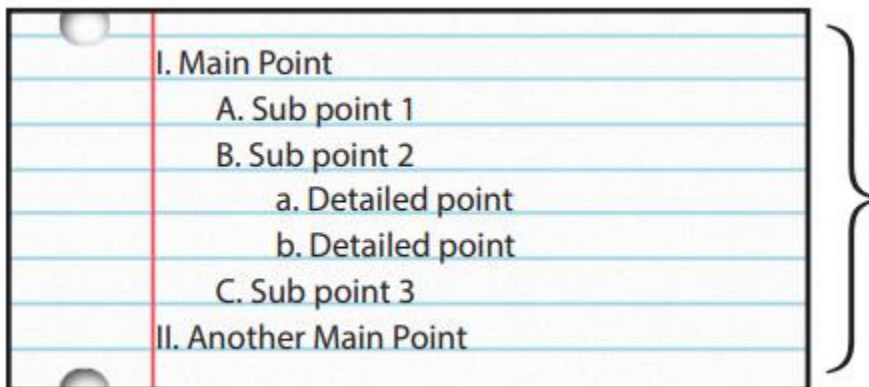
For:

- Top-level main ideas
- Quick reference

When:

- After class
- Before next class (review)

Outlining Method



Information is structured
from a
BIG, MAIN IDEA
down to
SMALL, SPECIFIC DETAILS

Mind Mapping Method

Great for:

- Visual learners
- Summarizing & studying
- Breaking down complex ideas

