

Note Taking & Studying Tips

How To Learn the Most Efficiently

How to take down the right info., understand it, and remember it later!

I Before a Lecture/Discussion

- A. Read or skim the text before class
- B. Pay attention to main categories and important concepts
- C. Identify unfamiliar words – look them up before class and listen for explanation during class
- D. Identify sections of material which are unclear or difficult
- E. Develop questions to ask in class

II Taking Notes

A. Organization

1. Keep a separate notebook or at least a separate section for each class
2. Create a title page with the page number on which each section begins
3. Date your notes and number all pages
4. Make notes brief
 - a. Use abbreviations and symbols instead of full words
 - b. Never use a sentence when you can use a phrase, or a phrase when you can use a word
5. Paraphrase when possible (put the notes in your own words)
 - a. Formulas, definitions, specific facts should be noted exactly
6. Use indentation or full outline format to distinguish between major and minor points
7. Use margins for questions, comments, or notes about unclear material
8. Develop a code system, example:
 - a. ? – unclear at time of lecture
 - b. ! – important
 - c. * – difficult

B. Content

1. Include all main ideas and enough subheadings to clarify understanding
2. Include diagrams and examples in notes whenever possible
3. Use margins for symbols or questions you have for easy location later
4. Instructors usually give clues on what is important, for example anything that is...
 - a. Supported by a picture or model
 - b. Repeated
 - c. Said with vocal emphasis
 - d. A question asked of the class
 - e. Given with word clues like: in conclusion, therefore, however, relationships, cause-effect, etc.
5. Leave space if you missed something so you can fill it in later

III Reviewing/Recopying Notes

- A. IMMEDIATE REVIEW - go over your notes as soon as possible
 1. Check for errors
 2. Clear up misunderstanding by checking with the instructor, the textbook or classmates
 3. **UNLESS YOU REVIEW WITHIN 24 HOURS, RETENTION DROPS SHARPLY** and you will have to spend more time relearning instead of reviewing!
- B. RECOPY NOTES into a spiral notebook
 1. Make sure draft notes are in the right order
 2. Use indented outline categories such as on this page
 3. Neatness
 4. Leave plenty of space for diagrams
 5. TITLE and LABEL all diagrams
 6. Color code using a standard key
 - a. Use the same colors to highlight or color code throughout then notebook
 - 1 Main headings (I, II, III, etc.)
 - 2 Subheadings (A, B, C, etc.)
 - 3 Vocabulary words as they appear within the notes
 - 4 Important points or things you have difficulty remembering

IV Studying Before a Test

- A. Read over and recopy notes WITHIN 24 HOURS of taking them so you don't have to cram too much before a test!
- B. Remove distractions while studying
- C. Review over 2-3 nights
- D. Read over about a ½ page at a time
- E. If you don't understand something in the notes, use your textbook to look up terms/concepts
- F. Ask yourself, "What are the main categories and most important points of this section of notes?"
- G. Cover the ½ page with your hand, then speak ALOUD what you remember
- H. Once you've said everything you remember, reread the section and see what you missed
- I. **Repeat covering the page and saying all the information aloud until you've remembered almost all the details in that section**
- J. Repeat Steps D through H until you are finished with the notes that will be covered on the test
- K. Pay attention to diagrams -- ask yourself, "Why is this important and what does the teacher expect me to know from this diagram?"
- L. Schedule 10 minute breaks after every 50 minutes of studying

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