

# NOTE-TAKING

A lot of important information is presented in class that you are responsible for learning. If you take good notes, you will have the information that you need to prepare for your tests.



## **Guidelines for Taking Good Notes:**

- Write your notes in your own words
- Make your notes brief
- Use abbreviations and symbols
- Be sure you understand your notes
- Pay Attention in class
- Review your notes after class

### **1. Pay Attention**

It is not possible to take good notes if you are not paying attention in class. Be sure to minimize distractions and make efforts to keep your mind engaged in the lesson that the teacher is presenting. If you try to make connections between what you are learning and what you already know, you will be a lot more successful at understanding and remembering the information being presented. **STAY FOCUSED ON THE TEACHER** and what he/she is saying.

### **2. What to Write Down**

- As you take notes, you should leave a margin of space in order to write down questions or comments later.
- Listen for the main points and write them down. Often teachers will put an agenda on the board which can be very helpful in focusing your attention and providing an outline of the main topics for the lesson. You should not try to write down everything, just those important items or things that you are not going to remember easily.
- **COPY DOWN ANYTHING THAT THE TEACHER WRITES ON THE BOARD.** If the teacher is writing it down, chances are that it is very important.
- Write down any questions that you have, or anything that you would like to review with the teacher following the lesson.
- When possible, use abbreviations to save time (i.e. "b/c" instead of "because," "w/o" for "without. Just make sure that you use the same ones all the time so that you understand the abbreviations that you used.

### **3. Review Your Notes after Class**

This is key to helping you to absorb and consolidate the information that you learned. Go over what you wrote, and write a summary of what the lesson was about and what you learned. Also write down any questions that you'd like to ask during the next class.

## Taking Notes From a Textbook



Use the following steps when taking notes from a textbook:

- *Preview the reading assignment (read the title, introduction, section headings, and summary)*
- *Read the whole assignment through once before you take any notes (read for the main idea)*
- *Consider questions to be answered (what must you do after the reading?)*
- *Take notes as you read over the material again (look for supporting details)*
- *Write down only the important information and ideas*
- *Use your own words*
- *Remember to make notes about any important pictures, diagrams, charts*
- *Use graphic organizers*
- *Make a list of new words*
- *Write down any questions you have for your teacher*

## Taking Lecture Notes (i.e. when your teacher is talking about a new topic)



Your teacher may present information in this format when introducing a new unit or when reviewing important information for a quiz or test.

**The following tips will help you take lecture notes:**

- *Write the topic and the date at the top of each page*
- *Listen carefully when the teacher introduces the topic*
- *Write your notes in your own word*
- *When you hear a word that is new to you, write it down*
- *Listen for key words such as: first, second, last, most important, etc.*
- *Copy what the teacher writes on the board or overhead projector.*

**NOTE:** When you are taking notes it is really important to LISTEN. Don't get so busy writing that you forget to listen to the teacher.

## ***Formatting Your Notes***

There are several different ways to organize notes that you take either from a text or from a lecture.

**WEB: the important information in a description can be easily organized in a web**

- name the subject in the middle of the web
- list the important details around it

**TABLE ORGANIZER: important information that follows the main idea/ supporting details pattern can be arranged in a simple table organizer**

- the tabletop names the main idea
- the legs of the table list supporting details

**VENN DIAGRAM: important information that compares two things can be organized in a Venn diagram**

- Areas 1 and 2 list details showing how the two subjects are different
- Area 3 lists details common to both subjects

**LIST: important information that follows the process pattern can be arranged in a list**

- list the steps or stages in the order that they are given in the reading