

## Taking Effective Classroom Notes

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1. Get down a written record of each class. Studies have shown that within two weeks you probably will forget 80 percent or more of what you have heard. And in four weeks, you are lucky if 5 percent remains!
2. Sit where the instructor will always see you, preferably towards the front of the room.
3. Read in advance about the topic to be discussed. You should be able to write more effective notes if you read the material before class, especially when the material is difficult. Reading the text in advance is also helpful if you have spelling problems that hinder notetaking. As you read the text, you should write down recurring terms that may come up in the lecture and that you might have trouble spelling.
4. Record notes as follows:
  - a. Use full-sized 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper.
  - b. Keep all the notes from each course in separate sections of a notebook.
  - c. Date each day's notes.
  - d. Take notes on one side of the page only and leave space at the top of the page and at the left-hand margin for later organizing and commentary.
  - e. Write legibly.
  - f. Abbreviate recurring terms in order to save time.
  - g. Use a highlighter to mark exams or quizzes that are announced as well as assignments that the teacher gives.
5. Try to write down your notes in the following outline form:  
Start main points at the margin. Indent secondary ideas and supporting details. Further indent more subordinate material.  
Main points are listed in the margin.  
Secondary points and supporting details are indented.  
More subordinate material is indented even further.
6. Watch for signals of importance. Write down whatever your instructor puts on the board. Always write down definitions.
7. Write down any examples the instructor provides and mark them with **EX**.
8. Be sure to write down the details that connect or explain main points.
9. Leave blank spaces for items or ideas you miss.
10. **Very Important!** Don't hesitate to ask the instructor questions if certain points are confusing you.
11. Don't stop taking notes during discussion periods.
12. Don't stop taking notes toward the end of the class.
13. Go over your notes soon after class. While they are still fresh in your mind, make your notes as clear as possible. A day later may be too late because, for most people, forgetting sets in almost at once. Re-organize the notes if necessary and use your highlighter again to pick out the more important details. Use the margins to make additional comments to yourself about important sections or things that still puzzle you. (Develop your own system of "stars" and "bullets" and highlighter colors to designate these areas of your notes.)