

Tips for Taking Notes

Before the lecture

- Complete the assigned reading to familiarize yourself with key vocabulary and concepts. Consider what questions arise as you read to guide your listening during the lecture.
- Find out or request for the slides to be available ahead of time so you can take notes alongside the slides, instead of copying them into your notes.
- Connect with a classmate to see if you can divide the labor of notetaking or meet up later to compare notes after class.

During the lecture

- Split your paper into two columns. On one side, record information that is clear to you. On the other side, write information that is confusing. This will help you actively engage with your own interpretation of the material.
- If the material is conceptual, focus on the main points, rather than copying down the entire presentation.
- If the material is factual, writing down verbatim can help, but only if you review the information within 24 hours.
- Ask yourself, “Why is my teacher giving me this information?”. Build understanding by considering the context around the topic.

After the lecture

- Review your notes and fill in any missing gaps.
- Check in with a classmate to compare notes.
- Review for a short period of time every day to increase your recall of the material.
- If you were unable to redefine, clarify or understand information in your notes, take it to the professor, tutoring services, or a study group.