

# Note Taking Tips



- Check out these strategies for note taking that can help you before, during and after class.
- Remember, there is no right way to take notes, but this resource will give you some ideas and strategies to inform your own note taking.
- Got great tips for taking notes? Let us know at [learning@uvic.ca](mailto:learning@uvic.ca) (subject line: Note Tips).

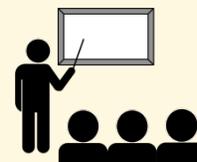
<p><i>Why is it important to take notes?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Helps trigger memories from lectures and readings</i></li><li>• <i>Helps you concentrate in class</i></li><li>• <i>Is an excellent resource for test preparation</i></li><li>• <i>May contain information not found elsewhere</i></li><li>• <i>Provides cues as to what the instructor thinks is important</i></li></ul> <p><i>Things to think about when taking notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Be consistent and selective</i></li><li>• <i>Don't try to write everything down</i></li><li>• <i>Try to have some organization and structure to your notes</i></li><li>• <i>Use abbreviations to reduce writing</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Give yourself a legend until you can remember them</i></li></ul></li></ul>
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## Before Class

- Do assigned readings before class! This will get you familiar with the material that is going to be lectured on in class and help you understand and determine what the important points are.
  - This can be especially important for courses with lots of new ideas and vocabulary which the instructor might not define or explain during lectures.
- Get to class early so that you can sit near the front of the class. This will help by:
  - Keeping you more focused on lecture materials.
  - Reduce distraction by others in the room.
- If using your laptop, turn off the internet on your computer. It can be easy to sneak onto Facebook or Youtube when you are supposed to be paying attention to class content.
- Take a few minutes to review the notes from your readings or previous lectures so that they are fresh in your mind.
- Date the page for the current lecture and give the page a title.
- Print off the powerpoint slides to add your own notes.

## During the Lecture

- Listen carefully and look for cues from the professor as to what's important.
  - Visual Cues:
    - Writing on the board
    - Presenting charts, graphs or performing demonstrations
  - Verbal Cues:
    - Repeating themselves, vocal emphasis, tone or voice and pace of speech
    - Emphasis on individual words or phrases
    - Each teacher has a key phrase they use to tell you what they are saying is important. Things like: "know this," "you should write this down," "this might be on the test," etc. Look for these!
- Write legibly. Notes on the page don't help when you can't read them.
- Notice how much time the instructor is spending on a point. Important stuff will probably be talked about more than less significant information.
- When possible, write notes in your own words but don't change the meaning of what is being said.
- Don't spend time writing down what you already know.
- Don't spend time writing down info that will be available later (like info from powerpoint slides).
- Leave space to add notes later.



## After Class

- Review your notes right after class so the information is more likely to stick in your memory.
  - Reviewing right after class also helps determine if there are points that you might have missed writing down and expand on points that need more detail.
- Reviewing after class helps you to identify and clarify any points that didn't make sense. Look in the textbook, ask another student or go to office hours.
- Take some time to connect the lectures to your readings and other course materials. Making these connections can help with learning, memory and studying for later.
- Review your notes periodically so they stay fresh in your mind. It will cut down on the amount of studying you need to do before an exam!



## Additional Resources

University of Victoria – Centre for Accessible Learning

- Check out our other resources! We have an Apps handout with info on note taking Apps.
- Need a note taker? Email [learning@uvic.ca](mailto:learning@uvic.ca) for more information