

So developing strong note-taking skills is essential—but the problem is, it isn't a skill that's generally taught. So how do you learn how to take good notes? What are the note-taking skills you ought to have, to make sure you get the most out of every class you take? Here are **7 important things you should know about taking the kind of notes that will help you succeed.**

- 1.** Read your assignment before you come to class. Note taking comes easier when you already have some understanding or awareness of the material.
- 2.** Get organized. Begin each lecture on a new page. It's important to date each new lecture, and number your pages. After class, make sure you go back to add a topic/heading to the top of each page to make finding specific information easier.
- 3.** Give yourself room. Consider writing on only one side of the paper, for greater legibility. Use loose-leaf notebooks for notes, which makes it easy to organize them when you review, as well as to rearrange your notes, insert additional materials like handouts and study guides, and insert notes you borrow from study partners or classmates. Most importantly, don't worry about using up all the available space on the page—give yourself room to go back and add information as your instructor continues to talk, and to make extra notes when you make connections in class.
- 4.** Think while you write! This means you can't write down every single word your instructor says. If you try to transcribe your teacher's lecture, you have no room for thinking about what you're writing and how it fits together, and you inevitably fall behind and get frustrated. As you listen and write, think about what information is most likely to be of use later, whether on a test, in an essay, or in completing a project. Focus on points that directly relate to or illustrate your reading. And during class, listen for verbal cues from your instructor that indicate important information.
- 5.** Ask questions. As you listen and write, make sure to record your questions, things you asked the professor about. This will help you stay aware of potential gaps in your understanding, and make sure you focus on those parts of the material when reviewing your notes later, and look up information you need to help strengthen what you've learned.
- 6.** Develop a system. Outlining? Numbered paragraphs? A mind-map? Charts and graphs? There's no right way to organize your notes. Experiment with the way that best reflects how you listen, how you think, and how you process information.
- 7.** Review. After the lecture, go through your notes. Consider leaving space on each page or after each important section of class, for a short summary, in your own words, of the material you covered. This can help you process the information by making you think it through and ensuring you understand it. Reviewing your notes also helps you remember the material, underscores the instructor's lecture, and lets you add things you want to make sure you don't forget and organize material that is connected.

There's no one way to take notes in class or develop note-taking skills, but it's an incredibly important ability to learn—and one that will help you not just throughout school, but throughout your career.

From <https://www.cc-sd.edu/blog/7-note-taking-skills-every-college-student-should-have>