

Note-Taking: Building Effective Listening Skills

** Note-taking is one way to enhance listening. Using a systematic approach to the taking and reviewing of your notes can add to your understanding and memory of the lectures.

BEFORE CLASS

- ✓ Develop a mind-set geared toward listening: tell yourself that you are ready to listen.
- ✓ Test yourself over the previous lecture while waiting for the next one to begin.
- ✓ Skim relevant reading assignments to acquaint yourself with main ideas, new technical terms, etc.
- ✓ Enhance your physical and mental alertness:
 - Eat a snack before class
 - Sit in the front and/or center of the room
 - Focus your attention on the speaker.
- ✓ Choose notebooks that will enhance your systematic note-taking.
 - A separate notebook with full-sized pages is recommended for each course.

DURING CLASS

- ✓ Listen for the structure and information in the lecture.
- ✓ Resist distractions, emotional reactions or boredom.
- ✓ Pay attention to the speaker for verbal, postural, and visual clues to what's important.
- ✓ Label important points and examples.
- ✓ When possible, try and translate the lecture into your own words.
- ✓ Be consistent in your use of form, abbreviation, etc.
- ✓ Ask questions if you don't understand or you need to clarify something.
- ✓ Don't close your notebook early and get ready to leave. The professor may be summarizing or highlighting the main points from the lecture.

AFTER CLASS

- ✓ Clear up any questions raised by the lecture by asking either the teacher or classmates.
 - ✓ Fill in missing points or misunderstood terms from the text or other sources.
 - ✓ Edit your notes:
 - Label main points
 - Add recall clues and questions to be answered.
- ** Key points in the notes can be highlighted with different colors of ink.
- ✓ Make note of your ideas and reflections, keeping them separate from those of the speaker.

Helpful reminders:

- ✓ Review your notes often!
- ✓ Look for the emergence of themes, main concepts, methods of presentation over the course of several lectures.
- ✓ Make up and answer possible test questions.