

# 4 Tips for Note Taking

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Note taking is a process that requires you to do things before, during, and after lectures. Deciding what is important enough to include in your notes, and what is not, can be difficult and frustrating. It is essential to listen well and to have selective note taking skills.

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## General Tips for Taking Notes:

- Be brief – focus on the main points and don't try to write down everything
- Use abbreviations and symbols – except for formulas, definitions and facts where you have to be exact
- Record what the professor is saying in your own words, if possible
- Leave margins and spaces for adding more information later
- Write on one side of the page; date and number the pages

## Before the Lecture:

- Read all assigned material – highlight important information and make notes in the margins
- Review previous lecture notes
- Sit near the front of the class. There are fewer distractions and it is easier to hear what the professor is saying

## During the Lecture:

- Pay special attention to the beginning and end of each class. The beginning will usually be a summary of the previous class; therefore, you can review your notes. The last five minutes may include key information as well as instructions for the next lecture
- Be an active listener. It's tough to keep your mind from wandering; however, paying close attention will ensure that you won't miss the important material
- Create a note taking method of your own and adapt it to your Professor's style of lecturing

## After the Lecture:

- Immediately review your notes. 50-80% of new material will not be retained if it is not reviewed within 24 hours
- Review your notes within a week and test yourself in key terminology
- Review your notes again in several weeks time for long-term memory retention
- Reworking your notes, rather than re-writing them, will help you retain the information