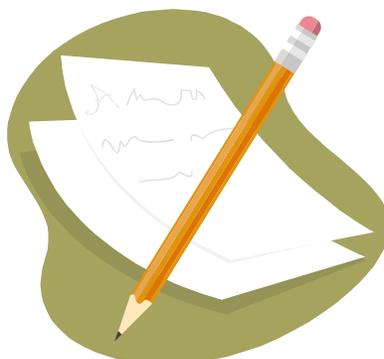




# **EFFECTIVE NOTE TAKING**



***THIS MODULE WILL SHOW YOU:***

- HOW TO PREPARE FOR LISTENING/NOTETAKING***
- HOW TO TAKE WELL ORGANIZED NOTES***
- HOW TO USE YOUR NOTES***

### SURVEY OF CURRENT NOTE TAKING SKILLS

The following quiz will help you survey your present note taking skills to highlight your strengths and weaknesses. It is hoped that once you are aware of your problem areas, you will take steps to improve these weaknesses.

	<b>Generally this is true (YES)</b>	<b>Sometimes this happens (UNDECIDED)</b>	<b>Never or rarely (NO)</b>
1. I avoid taking notes because it interferes my understanding of the lecture.			
2. I write down as much as I can during a lecture.			
3. I review my notes as soon as possible to reinforce information and fill in missing parts.			
4. I realize recopying notes will help me organize and I make every effort to do this.			
5. I do my reading assignments which relate to the lecture <u>prior</u> to the class.			
6. I make notes based on my reading assignments <u>prior</u> to the class.			
7. When taking notes, I listen for main ideas and supporting facts.			
8. I always attend lectures.			
9. I take notes in complete thoughts rather than in isolated words or brief phrases.			
10. I abbreviate words instead of writing out long or frequently used words.			

In order to take effective notes you must be a good listener--able to focus and concentrate on the lecturer and what he/she is saying.

### What You Can Do **BEFORE** Class

1. Read assignments before class. Many students try to substitute lectures for reading assignments. In order to take effective notes you need to read about the subject first. This helps you to determine what is important and what is not important; a key concept is note taking, since you want to take notes discriminately, not write down everything that is said.
2. Review your previous class notes--this will give lectures a feeling of continuity. It also reinforces the previous material.
3. Look at course outline to get the feel of where you are going.

### What to Do **DURING** Class

This is the most important phase of note taking. It involves use of attending behaviour. Attending behaviour involves fully focusing on the speaker by use of eye contact, body posture and verbal following (questions). By modifying your behaviour you create a psychological attitude conducive to accurate listening (the key to good note taking).

**Eye Contact** -If you are listening to someone, it helps your concentration to look at them.

**Body Posture** -leaning forward demonstrates interest and helps you to stay involved with what the lecturer is saying.

**Verbal Follow** -questions asked during the lecture demonstrate interest and attention, clarify information, and generally make for a livelier class.

Attending behaviour enables you to pick up clues from the lecturer as to what is important by noting voice fluctuation, pauses, facial expression, gestures, etc. Listening is an active process--you need to think about what is being said, don't just write down words. Anticipate what the instructor is going to say. Discriminate before you write, take down only what is important. Paraphrase what the instructor says; put it in your own words.

Organize information into meaningful statements--it will be easier to remember. Ask yourself "how will I remember this best?" "How can I relate this to what I already know?"

Be aware that where you sit in the classroom is significant. Successful students tend to sit near the front. Effective listening requires concentration and sitting in front reduces the number of possible distractions.

Listen For Main Ideas - Clue words such as “there are two reasons . . .”, “You will be responsible for this . . .” are signals that major concepts are forthcoming.

Other clue words:                   for example  
   First. . . second. . . third  
   The key here is  
   finally . . . thus. . .  
   on the other hand. . . however . . .

Notice the Instructor’s Lecture Style. Vary your note taking accordingly.

Summarize Important Points. Rewriting your notes may be a waste of time. Do this only if your notes are disorganized and difficult to study.

### What to Do **AFTER** Class

Do you usually tuck your notes away and forget them until exam time? If so, you are typical--this is a common mistake students make. Notes should be reviewed as soon after class as possible in order to fill in missing information and to reinforce learning while the lecture is still fresh in your mind. Brief, regular periodic review throughout the semester is an excellent way to master the material and build a solid foundation of information.

### Cornell System

A note taking method that incorporates such reviews is the Cornell System.

- Use a loose-leaf notebook. This allows for flexibility to add and reorganize material.
- Divide pages vertically about 1/3 of the way from the left margin.

*\*\* See next page for sample \*\**

*\*\* See page 5 for the 5 steps in the Cornell System \*\**

# Studying With The Cornell System

<b>Title</b> Key words Key phrases Questions	<b>Major Topic</b> Main Idea -detail -detail *example	Date Page No
<b>Gr. Lks.</b> h o m e S	<b>Geography</b> The Great Lakes -5 lakes -Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior *largest lake is Superior	Sept. 18 Pg. 3

*Step 2  
Reduce*

*Step 1  
Record*

Summary:

Summarize your notes in one or two lines here (do this when you go to study)

## **Cornell System of Note taking: 5 Steps**

1. **Record** (on the right side) during the lecture as many facts and ideas as you can legibly write.
2. **Reduce** (on the left side) as soon after the lecture as possible. Summarize the contents of the lecture. Include key words and main ideas. This step insures that you will not only review the lecture but analyse and evaluate the information in order to reduce the material.
3. **Recite** Using the left side as a “memory jogger” state the facts and ideas in your own words, without looking at the main column. Do this aloud and it will further reinforce the material.
4. **Reflect** Separate fact from opinion.
5. **Review** Spend 10 minutes or so daily quickly reviewing your notes. Research shows that every minute spent in review doubles recall. Regular review sessions simplify studying for final exams.

### **For effective class notes, REMEMBER**

- Read assignments BEFORE class
- Review previous notes before class begins
- Discuss class material with classmates
- Use attending behaviour to focus on lecturer; listen effectively
- Anticipate what the instructor will say
- Listen for ideas and supporting facts
- Review and summarize notes after class

## ***Quiz Time***

Answer the following:

1. List three things to do before class to help you take effective notes.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

*Continued on next page...*

2. List three things to do after class to help you remember lecture information.

1.

2.

3.

3. List the five steps in the Cornell System.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

4. Give an example of clue words that indicate the lecturer is giving a main idea.

5. **True/False**

(A) When taking notes the student should listen for main ideas and supporting facts.

(B) Listening is a passive activity.

(C) Summarizing notes after class reinforces learning and strengthens memory of material.

(D) Recopying your notes is an effective use of time.

(E) Frequent reviews of notes is an excellent learning techniques.

(F) Outlining is the best technique for note taking.

**ANSWERS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. BEFORE CLASS
  - (A) REVIEW PREVIOUS CLASS NOTES
  - (B) READ ASSIGNMENTS
  - (C) REVIEW COURSE OUTLINE
  - (D) DISCUSS MATERIAL WITH CLASSMATES
  
2. AFTER CLASS:
  - (A) SUMMARIZE NOTES
  - (B) RECITE CONCEPTS
  - (C) RELATE NOTES TO OTHER INFORMATION
  - (D) REVIEW NOTES AT FREQUENT INTERVALS
  
3. 1. RECORD    2. REDUCE    3. RECITE    4. REFLECT    5. REVIEW
  
4. (A) FOR EXAMPLE  
 (B) FIRST... SECOND... THIRD  
 (C) THE KEY IS  
 (D) YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS...
  
5. (A) TRUE                      (B) FALSE  
 (C) TRUE                      (D) FALSE  
 (E) TRUE                      (F) FALSE

*If you have any questions about note taking please contact the Study Skills Advisor  
 Academic Support Centre, Confederation College 475-6618*