

Guidelines for Note-Taking

1. Concentrate on the lecture or on the reading material.
2. Take notes consistently.
3. Take notes selectively. Do NOT try to write down every word. Remember that the average lecturer speaks approximately 125-140 words per minute, and the average note-taker writes at a rate of about 25 words per minute.
4. Translate ideas into your own words.
5. Organize notes into some sort of logical form.
6. Be brief. Write down only the major points and important information.
7. Write legibly. Notes are useless if you cannot read them later!
8. Don't be concerned with spelling and grammar.

Ways to Reduce and Streamline Notes

1. Eliminate small connecting words such as: is, are, was, were, a, an, the, would, this, of. Eliminate pronouns such as: they, these, his, that, them. However, be careful NOT to eliminate these three words: and, in, on.
2. Use symbols to abbreviate, such as:

+ , & for and, plus

= for equals

- for minus

for number

x for times

> for greater than, more, larger

< for less than, smaller, fewer than

w/ for with

w/o for without

w/in for within

----> for leads to, produces, results in

<---- for comes from

/ for per

For example:

"The diameter of the Earth is four times greater than the diameter of the Moon."

Becomes:

"Earth = 4x > diameter of Moon."

3. Substitute numerals with symbols, for instance:

Substitute "one" with 1

Substitute "third" with 3rd

4. Abbreviate:

Drop the last several letters of a word. For example, substitute "appropriate" with "approp."

Drop some of the internal vowels of a word. For example, substitute "large" with "lrg."