

Listening and Note Taking

Effective listening requires energy, so learning to actively listen and take good notes will improve learning.

Before Class

- Have a mind-set geared toward listening
- Prepare questions over the previous lecture
- Skim relevant reading assignments for main ideas, new technical terms, etc.
- Eat and sleep well before class
- Sit in the front or center of the room to help stay focused.
- Use separate notebooks for each class and date pages for easy reference

During Class

- Listen for the main idea of the lecture
- Avoid distractions – move away from the door or noisy neighbors
- Pay attention to the speaker for verbal, postural, and visual clues to what's important.
- Label important points and organizational clues: main points, examples, etc.
- Reword important points in notes for easier understanding later
- Be consistent in your use of form, abbreviation, etc.
- Ask questions if you don't understand.
- Pay attention until the last – ignore those who are preparing to leave-instructors give important information at the end of class

After Class

- Ask questions on confusing points or missing notes before you leave, if possible
- Fill in missing points or misunderstood terms from the text or other classmates
- Edit your notes by labeling main points, adding recall clues, creating questions
- Use different color highlighters for terms, questions, or other areas of the notes
- Rewrite, type, or make flash cards so the material is covered several times – repetition aids retention

Periodically

- Review notes
- Keep going over study aids like flash cards and review graphs, diagrams, or other visuals
- Look for themes, main concepts, and methods of presentation over the course of several lectures.
- Make up and answer possible test questions.