

Effective Note-Taking Tips and Strategies

Taking effective notes and spending time reviewing these notes after each class significantly improves retention and comprehension of textbook and lecture materials. By following a few simple steps, students can improve their GPA, and relieve a lot of stress when it comes time to study for and take an exam.

Step 1: Read your assignments before you come to class. Note-taking becomes easier when you already have some understanding or awareness of the material.

Step 2: Get organized! Begin each lecture on a new page. It is important to date each new lecture, and number your pages.

Step 3: Choose a note-taking strategy that works for you! There are **FIVE** note-taking strategies to choose from that can help with organizing your notes for easy review. Experiment and select a method that best reflects how you listen, think, and process information (see below for the five best note-taking strategies).

Step 4: Write down and ask your professor any questions that came up from the reading or lecture. This will help clear up any potential gaps in your understanding and make you focus on those parts of the material you need help strengthening.

Step 5: After each lecture, go through your notes. Reviewing your notes helps you remember the material, underscores the instructor's lecture, and lets you add things you want to make sure you don't forget.

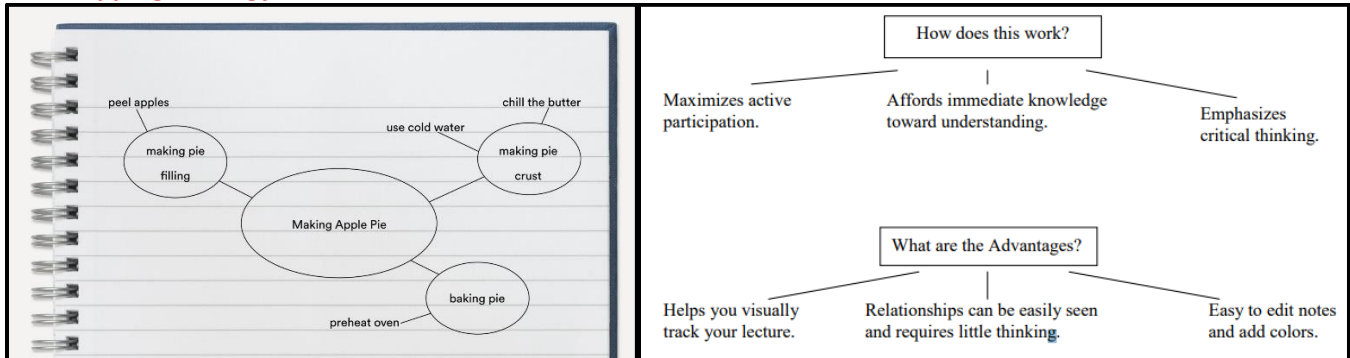
Five Best Note-Taking Strategies

The Cornell Strategy

The diagram shows a spiral-bound notebook page titled "Cornell Notes". In the top right corner, there are four lines for "Name", "Date", "Class", and "Period". The main body of the page is divided into two columns by a vertical line. The left column is narrower and contains a list of prompts: "Main Idea", "Key", "Question", and "(after notes are completed)". The right column is wider and contains a list of prompts: "Key words & ideas", "Important dates/people/places", "Repeated/Stressed Info", "Ideas/brainstorming written on board / overhead projector", "Info from textbook/stories", "Diagrams & Pictures", and "Formulas". At the bottom of the page, there is a horizontal line and a section labeled "Summary of your notes in your own words".

Begin by dividing your page into three sections (see above). The right column is larger for your initial notes (textbook or lecture). The left column is used after initial notetaking while you are reviewing your notes to record key points, terms, or any other cues that will help you to recall the information. The bottom section is a reflection or summary of your notes in your own words, in order to help retain the material.

The Mapping Strategy



The mapping strategy is useful for visual learners. It is similar to a flowchart, with the purpose of helping you identify relationships between concepts, phrases, and key terms. Begin by placing the main idea of what you've read, or are learning, in the center of a page. As you continue to read, add supporting terms, phrases, or concepts around it. Use lines or arrows to link the supporting concepts to the main idea.

The Charting Strategy

How?	Advantages	Disadvantages	When to use it?
Set up your paper in columns and label headings.	Helps pull out the relevant information.	Can be a hard system to learn to use.	If you'll be tested on facts and relationships.
The headings could be categories covered in the lecture.	Reduces the amount of writing required.	You will need to know what content is being covered at the beginning of the lecture.	If content is heavy and presented quickly — such as a history course with dates, people, events, etc.
Insert information (words, phrases, main ideas, etc.) into the appropriate column.	Provides easy review for memorizing facts and studying comparisons and relationships.		If you want to make an overview of the whole course on one big paper.

Set up your paper in columns and label appropriate headings for each topic. As you read the material, use the columns to record important phrases, terms, and ideas, and arrange that information according to the main concepts.

The Sentence Strategy

THE SENTENCE METHOD	
Page #	Today's Date
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write every new thought, fact, or topic on a separate line as you progress, numbering each sentence. 2. Advantages: it's more organized than writing paragraphs and still records most of the information. 3. Disadvantages: it's hard to determine major/minor points and it's hard to edit and review with clean-up. 4. It's a good method when there's lots of information and you don't know how the ideas fit together. <p>You can make some connections as you go (for more information, refer to #2).</p>	

The sentence note-taking method consists of writing a list of sentences as you read through the material. Each sentence should be a main point or important concept. Number each sentence as you take notes so you have a way to distinguish the different concepts. Once you're finished reading, rewrite your notes and organize the

sentences into themes or categories. This will make it easier to review when you want to look at your notes again.

The Outline Strategy

THE OUTLINING METHOD	
Page #	Today's Date
	Class Topic: How To Outline Notes
I.	The first level is reserved for each new topic/idea and is very general.
a.	This concept must always apply to the level above it (I)
i.	This concept must always apply to the level above it (a)
ii.	This is a second supporting piece of information for the level above it (a) but is equal to the previous information (i)
iii.	This information is a sister to (i) and (ii)
b.	This concept applies to the level above it (I) and is a "sister" to (a)
II.	You don't have to use Roman Numerals, Letters, and Numbers – try only indents, dashes, and bullets!
III.	Outlining requires listening and writing in points in an organizational pattern based on space indentation

This is similar to the sentence strategy, but with a more organized layout. Instead of randomly writing one sentence after another, sentences are grouped according to main points. The first sentence for each group should consist of a main concept. Any related terms, phrases, or ideas are written underneath that sentence.

Additional Note-Taking Tips:

- ✓ Do not try to write down **every** word of the lecture, instead focus on the main points.
- ✓ If you have a question, do not be **afraid** to ask. If you had any questions during your reading, now is the time to bring them up in class.
- ✓ Watch out for material the professor places on the **blackboard**. If your professor feels strongly enough to write something down, it must be important.
- ✓ Keep the back of note pages **blank**. This is a good place to put additional information on a topic covered in class, to place questions you may have, or to write down questions other students asked.
- ✓ If an idea or topic is stressed as important by the professor, note it by a star or **highlight** the point.
- ✓ **Do not stop** taking notes until the class is over. Packing up early might cause you to miss some important information.
- ✓ Students should be **reviewing** all textbook and lecture notes **after** each class. After class is the best time because most of the material is still fresh on your mind.