

Learning Café Quick Study Tips

NOTETAKING

One key to success in college is to take good notes. As well as giving you material to study from, the process of taking notes will help you to take an active role in your classes and learn more.

Taking Notes

There are several different ways to take notes, none of which is the correct way. Try them, or a combination of them until you find the way that works best for you. No matter which method you prefer, there are some common guidelines.

- ✓ Label, date, and number all notes
- ✓ Use standard abbreviations
- ✓ Leave plenty of blank space



© Microsoft®

Notetaking Methods

(these methods can also be used to take notes from textbooks)

Outline

Use a Roman numeral outline or indent to show the relative importance of ideas. Recording ideas and organizing them, at the same time forces you to pay attention and think about what is being discussed.

Cornell

On each page, draw a vertical line 1/3 of the distance from the left side of the paper. Write your notes on the remaining 2/3 of the page to the right of the line. Use the wide margin for key words and sample questions. The method of notetaking is also an excellent method of review. It is also flexible and can be combined with other methods.

Mind Maps

This method shows the relationships between ideas. Different sizes of paper, different colors of ink, pictures, and diagrams, all add to the visual impact of this material. This method allows you to condense a large amount of material onto one page and still have notes that are understandable.

Using Your Notes

Review within 24 hours

The sooner you review your notes, the better. Forgetting occurs rapidly – approximately 60% of the information learned in class is forgotten within the first hour after class. It is easier to decipher your notes soon after they have been written as you have a clearer memory of what you heard. Reviewing is more than reading over your notes. It is a time to formulate the questions your notes answer and this is also when you can re-organize and reduce 3 or 4 pages of notes to a one-page summary.

Edit your notes As soon as possible, fix anything that is illegible. Write out any unclear abbreviations and check to see if you have missed anything: compare your notes with a classmate.

Conduct weekly reviews Conducting a 20 minute (approximately) review of your notes each week is another way to keep the information current

Tips

- 1. Complete assignments before class** If you read ahead, you will find it easier to distinguish main ideas from details and so will be better able to keep up with the lecture. You will find it easier to focus in class if you have some idea of what the instructor is talking about.
- 2. Bring what you need** Have your supply of pens, pencils, and paper handy before the class starts. It is most efficient to keep your notes in a 3 ring binder.
- 3. Choose your seat wisely** Sit where you have a clear view of the instructor, the board, and the overhead projection screen, and where there are few distractions.
- 4. Preview** Reviewing the previous day's notes before class will help you to get mentally prepared for class.
- 5. Accept your instructors as they are** You can learn just as much from an instructor you don't like as you can from one you do like. Mannerisms, fashion sense, and personal hygiene may be distracting, but have nothing to do with the instructor's performance. Put your judgments aside and focus on the material the instructor is presenting.
- 6. Be open minded** Many people mentally "shut off" when they are exposed to ideas with which they do not agree. Shutting off means you risk missing information given in class. Make a note to argue the point later – with yourself, with a classmate, or with the instructor.
- 7. If your instructor talks too fast** Ask him/her to slow down. Record main points only. Reading ahead helps you to pick out main ideas. Compare notes with classmates after class.
- 8. If you get behind** Don't try to catch up. Leave a large blank space and start from the present. Then, fill in the missing details after class.

*For more information on any of the suggestions given here, please visit the Learning Café, located in the library (CE1340) / 403-382-6952 / learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*