

Taking Notes

Lesson Objectives:

- Describe why taking notes can improve learning.
- Define summarizing.
- List techniques for taking notes.
- Explain how a computer can improve note taking.
- Exhibit the ability to effectively take notes.

Please read the information below about taking notes.

Many students improve their learning by taking notes while or after they read an assignment. Taking notes helps you remember facts and keeps your attention focused. When you take notes, both your mind and your hands are involved in listening. Effectively taking notes includes going back to each page, section, or paragraph in order to write down the main ideas. Students might also take notes while listening to an instructor's lecture, then review their notes shortly after the lecture is finished. Whether following written text in a book or listening to information which is provided verbally, the ability to write the information into your own words for use later is called summarizing. Summarizing helps you remember what you have read or heard. It also helps you review the information for a test.

There is no right or wrong way to take notes. Each person needs to develop a way of taking notes that works well for him/her. However, there are some techniques that will help you develop your own style:

- When taking notes, organize them by topic and/or date, whichever is best for you.
- Focus on key words and main ideas.
- Write the notes in your own words.
- Be brief. Summarize the main idea(s). Do not try to copy word for word from the text or the lecture.

- Use bulleted lists, asterisks, arrows, or other symbols to outline the information and show relationships among ideas.
- Make note of any questions you have or actions you need to take.
- Review your notes to be sure you understand concepts or instructions.
- If necessary, make additions and clarifications to your notes immediately after you finish taking them.

Many people find using a computer to take notes helpful. Computer notes are more legible and easier to edit. You will find it easier to search for specific terms or assignments. A laptop computer, which is portable, will enable you to take notes in almost any setting. However, it is important to resist the temptation to play games, check message, search the Internet, or allow yourself to be distracted in some other way.