Note-Taking Skills

Why Take Notes?

- It helps you remember information.
- It helps you concentrate in class.
- Your notes give you clues to what information will show up on the next test.
- Your notes will often contain information not available in your textbook.

The Do’s and Don’ts of Note-taking:

DO

- Use abbreviations and symbols.
  - Examples: & instead of AND, or “approp” instead of appropriate.
- Go to the lecture on time so not to miss the introductory overview.
- Sit where you can see and hear, and away from friends who may distract you.
- Prepare beforehand by re-reading your notes from the previous class.
- Take notes on a computer if you know you cannot read your handwriting.

DON’T*

- Don’t try to write down every word!
- Don’t be concerned with correct spelling and grammar, as long as you can read your notes.
- Don’t write complete sentences.
- Don’t take notes on your computer if you cannot type at a good pace.

*All of the above are time wasters! Remember – the average instructor speaks 125-140 words per minute, and the average student writes at a rate of 25 words per minute. Therefore you need to focus on the MAIN POINTS.

Tips for finding the main points:

- Your instructor will often pause before or after the main point.
- Your instructor will often use repetition to emphasize the main point.
- Your instructor will often write the main points on the board, or on their power point presentations.
- Main points will always be mentioned in summaries so listen carefully to the short overview of the topic at the beginning of class and the summary at the end.


http://www.arc.sbc.edu/nots.html
Keep your notes organized:

Outlining is often the best way to organize your notes. Here is an example of outlining:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Topic #1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Main Point #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Sub-points – info/def about the Main Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Main Point #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Sub-points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Topic #2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outlining is easy in Microsoft Office Word. Once you type “I.” and hit the spacebar, Word will automatically start formatting notes like the above example.

If you want to indent from “I.” to “a.”, press the TAB button, and so on if you want to go from “a.” to “i.” and etc…

If you want to go backward, from “i.” to “a.” and so forth, press SHIFT + TAB.

If you want to get out of the outline cycle altogether, you just press BACKSPACE or ENTER until your cursor is back to the beginning of the sentence or aligned with the left margin.


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