



PRIOR TO CLASS

- **Get to class early** so that you can choose a seat free of distractions and close to the lecturer.
- **Anticipate what will be presented** in class based on:
 - the syllabus
 - what has been presented in the course thus far
 - a quick review of your notes from the last lecture
 - a quick glance at the readings assigned for the current class

DURING CLASS

- **Listen actively and participate** in the lecture. For example, respond to and ask questions during class. The more information you understand, the less you'll have to memorize.
- **Organize notes into a logical form** using a [note taking system](#) such as outlining, [mapping](#) or the [Cornell method](#).
- **Highlight the key points** and distinguish main points from details. Listen for clues. Instructors are usually making an important point if they:
 - take a deep breath
 - change their intonation
 - pause before or after an idea
 - use repetition to emphasize a point
 - write an idea on the board
 - spend a lot of time explaining something
- **Take notes selectively.** Instead of copying information verbatim, translate ideas into your own words. Instead of using complete sentences, rather be brief.
- **Leave noticeable blanks** for words, ideas, or dates that you didn't catch but can fill in later.
- **Record possible questions** related to the material. This makes it easy to follow up with professors, or to offer a question at the end of the lecture.

- **Make it visual** by using diagrams, illustrations, color highlighters, or any other kind of visuals that help you remember what is most important.
- **Write by hand, if possible**, and utilize its kinesthetic value, which boosts learning in a way that doesn't happen when you're typing. You could type your notes at the end of the day (see after class).
- **Keep your notes organized** by dating your notes, numbering the pages and indicating the course name.
- **Cite your sources** as you take notes and specify where information is coming from, e.g. from the professor, an online article, a comment from a peer, etc.
- **Streamline by using abbreviations and shortcuts**, for example
 - Substitute numerals with symbols (e.g. three = 3)
 - Abbreviate by dropping the last several letters of a word (e.g. appropriate = approp.) or some of the internal vowels of a word (e.g. large =lrg.)
 - Use symbols to abbreviate, such as
 - +, & *for* and, plus
 - = *for* equals
 - # *for* number
 - w/o *for* without
 - w/in *for* within
 - / *for* per

AFTER CLASS

- **Review your notes** within a few hours (at least within 24 hours of taking them) to edit and expand on the notes that you took in class
- **Fill in any blanks** you left and answer any questions you may have from lecture.
- **Annotate your notes** indicating key terms and concepts. Use comparison and contrast to find relationships between information presented in lecture and information presented in the readings, in section, in the written work, in the problems assigned.
- **Write a one paragraph or 3-5 bullet point summary** at the end of one set of lecture notes, or at the end of each page of notes.
- **Type your notes** if you want to process them deeper, or if you prefer the convenience of digital organization. Use note-taking apps such as Microsoft OneNote, Evernote or new favorites such as [Roam Research](#) or [Notion](#).

Resources: [Rasmussen College](#) and [Stanford University](#).

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LEARNING AND TEACHING

Academic Coaching

Want to meet with an Academic Coach?
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