Note-taking Skills

20 “Do’s” of Note Taking
What you’ll learn

• In this presentation you will learn 20 good note-taking skills that you can apply in lectures and text reading.
Why take notes?
Importance of note-taking

• Adequate notes are necessary to efficiently study and learn.

• The purpose of notes is to provide you with a written record of the ideas you thought were important in the lecture.

• Note taking can be done during lectures or when reading.

• The act of writing notes keeps you focused.
## Activity

Here are some common note-taking skills / habits that students adopt in lectures. Consider each one in turn and determine whether the skill / habit is a **good habit or bad habit**.

1. I listen actively to what the lecturer says to ensure that I understand the point before I write.
2. I pay attention to cues for important points, transition from one point to the next, repetition of points for emphasis, changes in voice inflections, listing of a series of points, etc.
3. If I disagree with the points, I will keep arguing in my mind.
4. I raise questions if appropriate.
5. I use large notebooks to take notes.
6. I leave some blanks between points.
7. I take down everything that the lecturer says.
8. I don’t pay attention to some minor points which do not seem related to each other in the lecture.
9. My notes are difficult to read, and I always spell out every word without using abbreviations.
10. I rarely copy the things written on the board.
So what do I need to know to take good notes? See if you can fill in the blanks that follow. Answers on left.
20 Do’s of Note-taking

1. Do your _______ before you go to class. Try to guess what the instructor will talk about.

2. Do think of yourself as a _______ with one of the richest sources of clues standing directly in front of you.

3. Do have your mind set and ready to receive the first idea that is presented. Try to keep your _______ from wandering.

4. Do keep your notes for each class _______ from other classes.

5. Do not try to take down every ______ your teacher says. You will miss the overall point your teacher is trying to make. Spend more time listening and attempt to take down the main points.
6. Do leave some blanks as you move from one point to the next so that you can fill in additional _____ later if necessary. Your objective is to take helpful notes, not to save paper.

7. Do listen for _____ as to important points, transitions from one point to the next, repetition of ideas, changes in voice inflections, and a list or series of points.

8. Do remember that many teachers attempt to present a few ______ points and several ______ points in a lecture. The rest is explanatory material and samples.

9. Do continually ask yourself “How does this ______ to the main point….to what we talked about last time….to what I read in the textbook.”

10. Do copy everything written on the _______, regardless. Have you ever stopped to think that every blackboard scribble may be a clue to an exam item?
11. Do develop your own _________ to note-taking.

Three examples of note-taking:

1. Use diagrams and pictures where necessary. Sometimes it is helpful to draw pictures that illustrate the connections between ideas, sequences, or events. (See next slides as examples)

Try clustering your thoughts and ideas. Do map and organize your thoughts with circles; then connect them.
- Start in the middle of the page with the topic and cluster thoughts around that.
- Connect circles after class recalling how connections were made.
- Write a paragraph about these connections.
Gathering Ideas: Clustering
Note-taking Skills

Diagram:

- Reading Strategies
  - purposes
  - survey
  - selecting sources
- Reading for understanding
  - academic writing
  - content difficulties
  - technical jargon
- Take notes
  - purposes
  - prepare
  - lectures seminars
  - check afterwards
  - structure
  - linear
  - mapping
  - type of notes
- Texts
  - active reading
  - be interested
  - question
Note-taking Skills

Cornell Notes

2

• Main notes column (done in class)

• Key word column (done after class)

Notes taken in class are written in this portion of the page.

Key words that you make after class go here.

Ideally, focus on main ideas and important details.
3. Linear Note-taking

• **A. MAJOR TOPIC**
  1. Key point
     • supporting point.
     • supporting point.
     • supporting point.
  2. Key Point
     • supporting point.
     • supporting point.
     • supporting point.

• **B. MAJOR TOPIC**
Note-taking Skills

Linear Example:

• To motivate oneself in life:
  – Create a vision of who you want to be
  • Make it a vision that you will “stay hungry” for or “up to”
  • Don’t wait until you receive one
  • Create it now; it can always be changed later
12. Do review what your teacher said. ______ after the lecture, write the main points, questions, and cue words in the left-hand area of your notes. Underline some of them. Use colored pencils. Draw arrows. Star important points. Re writing some notes may be helpful.

13. Do use the above summary to see if you can ______ the notes in your own words when they are covered up. Review them within 24 hours.

14. Do pay special attention at the end of the lecture, because a lot of information might be given in the last ______ minutes.

15. When it comes to note-taking, ______ is more: develop abbreviations to reduce the amount you have to write.
16. Do review the week before an _____.
   For each page of notes, tie them together to each other and the text.

17. Do make flash ______ for unfamiliar vocabulary, ideas or concepts.

18. Do obtain notes for missed classes.
   Considering forming a partnership with another _______ at the beginning of class on whom you can rely for notes.

19. Do always take notes from your reading. If you highlight something, consider writing it in your notes. Simply highlighting something doesn’t help you ________ the information.
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>20.</strong></td>
<td>Do use the SQ4R system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How SQ4R works:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survey</strong></td>
<td>Here is where you skim or survey the material. It means looking over the whole assignment before you actually start to read it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much material does the author use to get their idea across?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention to headings and subheadings. Look at charts, pictures, graphs, captions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SQ4R continued

**Question**

This is a crucial stage in personalizing the material, making it really yours.

From your survey write down questions that you, personally, want answered.

What are you curious about here?

What might the author be able to tell you about the topic that you don’t already know?

Sometimes, turning the headings and subheadings into questions helps.
Now you are ready to actually read the assignment.

Read the introductory paragraphs rather carefully.
Add to your personal list of questions
Add difficult words to your question sheet
Keep asking yourself: What is the author’s main purpose in writing this material?
Note-taking Skills

SQ4R continued

Review
After you have completed the reading, try to remember each section. What was the author’s main purpose? What were the chief points? What was the overall plan?

Recite
One of the best ways of understanding anything is to tell it to someone else in your own words.
At this final stage, “tell” your answers to the questions.

Reflect
Think about what you have just learned and how it ties with the ideas from previous readings and classroom notes.
• Learn your instructor’s style to detect the structure and inter-relationship of ideas in a lecture
• e.g., starts with written outline, follows it, repeats key ideas, does not get off topic, ends on time.
• e.g., starts with no outline, meanders through various topics, writes on the board, sums lecture very well at the end
Note-taking Skills

Summary

• In this presentation, you have been introduced to some common note-taking skills/habits.

• Take a moment to reflect.

• On a separate piece of paper write your top five strategies.
Create the vision that you are a great note taker.

Thank you