

Note Taking



Learn to be an efficient note taker.

Save time by taking notes that work for you!

Note taking Strategies

good note taking skills require practice and dedication

First steps...

Make sure you are ready for class. Attend the course with a good attitude.

Show up to class a few minutes early to allow for time to settle in.

Turn off your cell phone and prepare to focus on the class lecture, discussion and activities.

Bring required tools for taking notes and organize them in front of you.

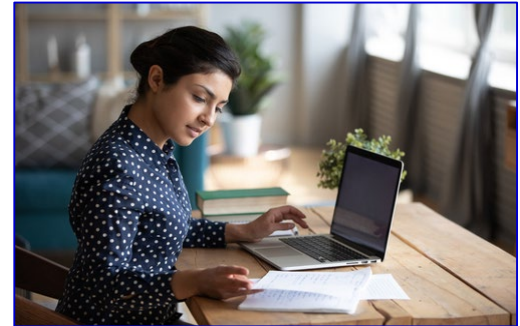
If you can't make it to class, plan ahead for a friend to share their notes with you.



Note taking Strategies

good note taking skills require diligence and consistency

- Review notes from the prior class to refresh your memory.
- Make a commitment to yourself that you are in this class to succeed.
- Sit with students who are dedicated to doing well. Talkative students are not conducive to learning. Move your seat if you have to.
- Ask fellow classmates for their phone numbers so you can ask for help or clarification if you need it.
- Try different note taking techniques in order to decide which ones work best for you.
- Note taking is a learned skill. We are not born knowing how to take notes.
- Practice is the key to understanding and feeling confident in your note taking skills.



OBSERVE, RECORD, REVIEW

Note taking

OBSERVE

Set the Stage for a Perfect Performance

- Have homework completed so that you are familiar with the topic that is going to be presented.
- Make sure you have pens that work, pencils with erasers for math problems, paper, any kind of supplies that are necessary for your classes. Preparation shows that you are interested in what you are doing.
- Use different colored highlighter pens to draw attention to important ideas.
- Sit close to the front to increase your attention level and to keep from being distracted.
- Review notes from the previous class and look at your homework before class starts.
- If you are thinking about what you are going to do after class, or if you are stuck on a personal incident that keeps replaying itself in your head, write a quick note about it and try to let it go until after class.

OBSERVE, RECORD, REVIEW

Note taking

- *DATE* your notes and identify the class.
- Be aware of your awareness. Bring your wandering mind into the present.
- Pay attention to your handwriting. Focus on the lecture and your notes.
- Involve yourself in class activities. Make it interesting and have some fun.
- Try not to judge the instructor's lecturing style.
- Make a note about what you disagree with and hold off on the debate.
- Relate the class to your goals.
- Listen for repetition.
- Pay attention to handouts and computer projected information.



RECORD

The following note taking techniques can improve the effectiveness of your notes.

Cornell Method

Outline Method

Mind Mapping




The Cornell Method

- On a sheet of paper draw a line down the left side about 2 inches from the edge.
- During the lecture, write the topic you are writing about on the left side of the line and write your notes on the right side of the line.
- Skip a few lines between ideas or topics.
- Take down the main ideas and don't focus on little details.
- Write a summary at the bottom of the page at the end of class.
- After class, review your notes as soon as possible. Rewrite them or transfer main points on to 3x5 cards.
- Test yourself by covering up the right side of your notes and then the left side of your notes.
- Use the left column as your review outline.



The Cornell Method, example

	COUN 160 T/TH 10:30-11:55	March 31, 2023
Note Taking	A way to organize the course information into a format I can understand	
Tools	Pens, paper, laptop, calculator...all the tools I need in class to be successful	
Prepare Ahead	Do homework! Do a quick review of the notes from the last class, review homework before class.	
Pay attention	Pay attention to my attention. My mind naturally wants to wander off, pay attention to my attention! Gently bring it back to the here and now.	
<u>Homework</u>	Exercise: While studying, use a timer set in 15 minute intervals and write down what I am thinking about each time it goes off. Do this for two hours a day. At first I will be all over the place, but in a week I will train my mind to focus on what I am doing in the moment.	
	Prepare for class by doing my home work and reviewing the class syllabus. Bring the proper tools, put my phone on silent and put it away, pay attention to where my wandering attention. Focus on class!	

Outline Method

Outlines are great for information that is presented in a well-organized and thoughtful manner. Generally, information that is sequential and moves from a main idea to detail information is best for this method.

- Use Roman numerals and indent outline to better organize your information
- Write down the main point followed by supporting ideas
- Leave room between main points in order to add more information later if necessary
- Be neat. Be efficient. You are recording *and* organizing your notes at the same time!



Outline Method, example

PSY 101 MW 10:30-12:00

March 31, 2023

Chapter 4

Topic: Erickson's Eight Stages of Human Development

I Stage 1: Infancy age 0-1

A. Trust versus Mistrust

1. Baby depends on parent for food, shelter, comfort, meeting needs/blind trust.
2. If needs are met, baby will develop a secure attachment w/parent
3. If needs are not met, baby will develop mistrust towards people and world

II Stage 2: Toddler age 1-2

B. Autonomy versus Doubt

1. Toddler learns to walk, talk, use toilet, eat, basic language skill building. Their self-control and self confidence begin to develop at this stage.
2. If parent encourages independence in the child, mistakes and all, the child will develop confidence to cope with future situations that require choice, control and independence.
3. If parent is over protective and disapproving of the child's act of independence, the child may show shame and doubt about their behavior and abilities.

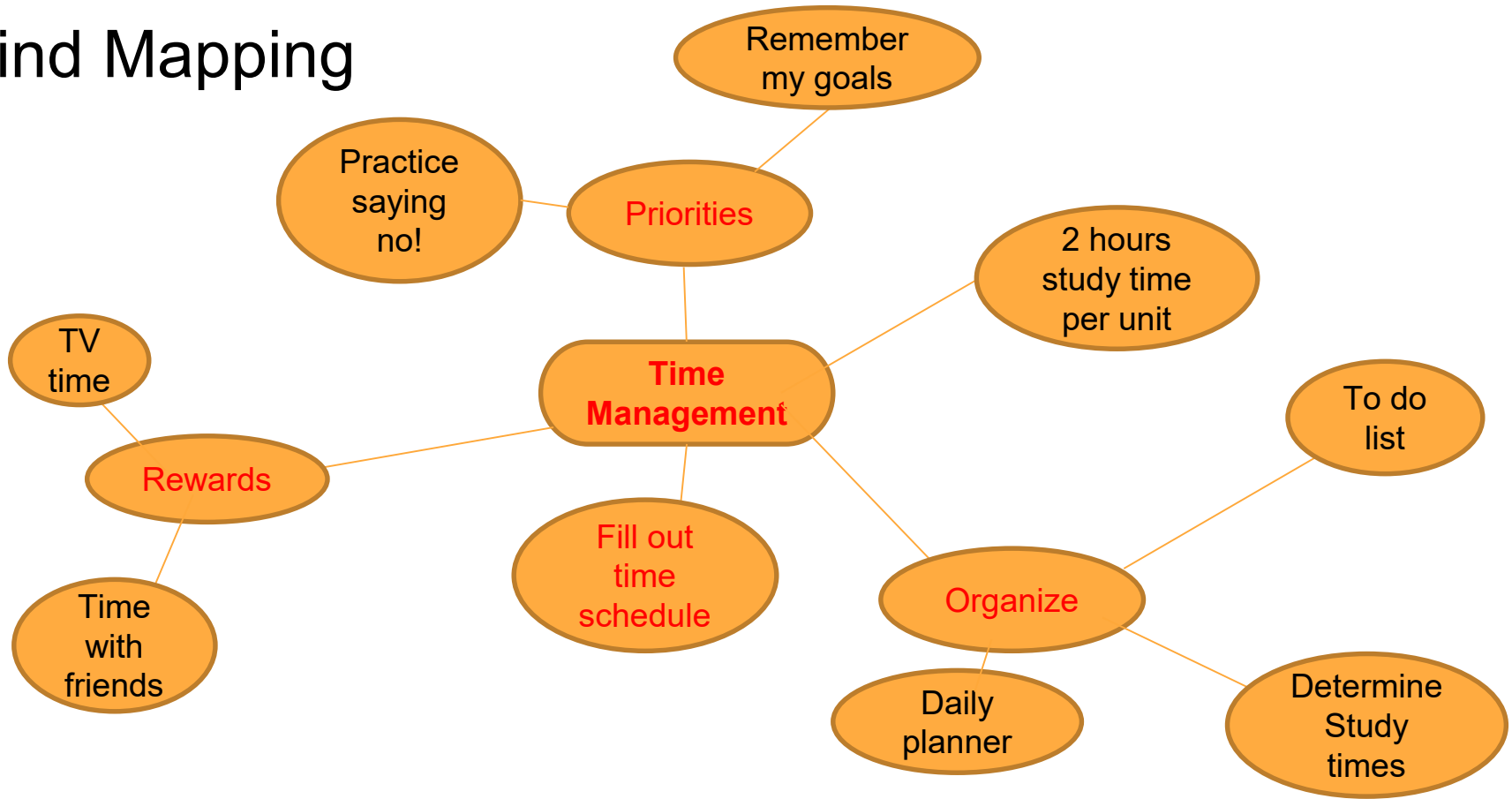


Mind Mapping

Mind mapping shows the relationship of ideas visually. If you have a basic foundation from your homework, mind mapping diagrams major concepts to specific details.

- Turn your paper sideways so that the 11-inch side is horizontal to you. Date it.
- Large sheets of paper (11x17) work great for this method
- Write the topic of the lecture in the center of the page. Circle it.
- Draw a line from the topic and write out key words. Circle those.
- Write sub topics off the main key word topics.
- Write short descriptive statements/ just the facts.
- When a new topic is started, begin a new map on another piece of paper.

Mind Mapping



REVIEW

Reviewing your notes is an integral part of studying.

Reviewing your notes within **24 hours** will increase your recall of the information exponentially at test time.

- Redraft notes that are messy and confusing.
- Rewrite notes or type them over to reinforce information. It's a good way to review.
- Review within 24 hours. Your short-term memory holds the information for only brief amounts of time. Repetition allows for your long-term memory to carry the information from short-term memory and retain the information for long periods of time.
- **Repetition** is the key. Ten to fifteen minutes of review a day can make the difference at test time. This method makes cramming obsolete. Remember, we forget about 80% of what we learn within 24 hours, unless you review...
- Edit your notes so that they state clearly and precisely what you want to learn.

REVIEW

- Write notes on handouts. Review handouts, three hole punch and store them in a notebook.
- Make a “key word” vocabulary list so that you can test yourself on terms during the semester. Add new words as the semester progresses. Test yourself often.
- Weekly reviews over previous work help to put all the work into perspective and ensure better readiness at test time.
- Put your notes on 3x5 cards and test yourself at different times of the day.
- Make sure you reward yourself for papers completed, tests passed and classes finished!



TAKING LECTURE NOTES

LOOK FOR CLUES:

Instructors usually give clues as to what is important to write down. Some of the more common examples are:

1. Material written on the blackboard (including hand outs and page references)
2. Repetition
3. Emphasis
 - a. Emphasis can be judged by tone of voice and gesture.
 - b. Emphasis can be judged by the amount of time an instructor spends on a point and the number of examples they use.
4. Word signals (e.g. "There are **two points of view** on . . . " "The **third** reason is . . . " " In **conclusion** . . . ")
5. *Summaries* given at the end of class.
6. *Reviews* given at the beginning of class.

TAKING LECTURE NOTES

DEVELOP YOUR OWN METHOD

Each student will develop their own method of taking notes, but most students find the following suggestions helpful:

A. Make your notes brief.

1. Never use a sentence where you can use a phrase. Never use a phrase where you can use a word.
2. Use abbreviations and symbols, but be consistent.

B. Put most notes in your own words. However, the following should be noted exactly:

1. Formulas
2. Definitions
3. Specific facts

C. Use outline form and/or a numbering system. Indention helps you distinguish major from minor points.

D. If you miss a statement, write key words, skip a few spaces, and get the information later.

E. Don't try to use every space on the page. Leave room for coordinating your notes with the text after the lecture. (You may want to list key terms in the margin or make a summary of the contents of the page.)

F. Date your notes and number the pages.

Adapted from Keys to College Success, Carter, Kravits © 8th Edition, Pearson© 2015

SAVING TIME ON NOTE-TAKING

1. Every student is different. Only rewrite your notes if that is how you relearn the material. However, if you are the type of student who rewrites to understand: **DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!**
2. Avoid shorthand. Though this may work for secretaries, it's not exactly user-friendly for students. Shorthand notes can't be studied directly, they must be transcribed.
3. Decide whether recording your lecture will be helpful to you. In the beginning of your academic career it may be helpful to have the ability to go back over a lecture in case there is something that was missed. Once you can master the art of note-taking, however, this method will become ineffectual. Also listening to tapes is time-consuming; good note taking is more time effective.
4. Don't write down everything that you read or hear. Be alert and attentive to the main points. Concentrate on the "meat" of the subject and forget the trimmings.
5. Notes should consist of key words or very short sentences. If a speaker gets sidetracked it is often possible to go back and add further information.
6. Take accurate notes. You should usually use your own words, but try not to change the meaning. If you quote **directly** from an author, **quote correctly & credit the author!**

7. Think a minute about the material before you start making notes. Don't take notes just to be taking notes! Take notes that will be of value to you when you look them over at a later date.
8. Have a uniform system of punctuation and abbreviation that will make sense to you. Use a skeleton outline and show importance by indenting. Leave lots of white space for later additions.
9. Omit descriptions and full explanations. Keep your notes short and to the point. Condense your material so you can grasp it rapidly.
10. Don't worry about missing a point.
11. Don't keep notes on oddly shaped pieces of paper. Keep notes in order and in one place. (3 ringed binder is an asset.)
12. Shortly after making your notes, go back and rework (not redo) your notes by adding extra points and spelling out unclear items. Remember, we forget rapidly. Budget time for this vital step just as you do for the class itself.
13. Review your notes regularly. This is the only way to achieve lasting memory.

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