

## Easier Notetaking

If you record main ideas, details, and examples, using the indentation system to show the lecture's organization, you will take adequate notes. However, there are some tips you can follow to make notetaking easier, to make your notes more complete, and to make study and review easier.

Use ink: Pencil tends to smear and is harder to read.

Use standard sized notebook and paper: Paper smaller than 8 ½ x 11" doesn't allow you to write as much on a page, and it is more difficult to see the overall organization of a lecture if you have to flip through a lot of pages.

Keep a separate notebook or section for each course: You need to have notes for each course together so that you can review them easily.

Date your notes: For easy reference later, be sure to date your notes. Your instructor may announce that an exam will cover everything presented after a certain date. If your notes are not dated, you will not know where to begin to study.

Leave blank spaces: To make sure your notes are more readable and to make it easier to see the organization of ideas, leave plenty of blank space. If you know you missed a detail or definition, leave additional blank space. You can fill it in later by checking with a friend or referring to the text.

Mark assignments: Occasionally an instructor will announce an assignment or test date in the middle of a lecture. Of course, you will jot it down, but be sure to mark "Assignment" or "Test Date" in the margin, or circle the date so you can find it easily and transfer it to your assignment notebook.

Mark ideas that are unclear: If an instructor presents a fact or idea which is unclear to you or one which you do not understand, put a question mark in the margin. Later, ask your instructor or another student about this idea.

Sit in the front of the classroom: Especially in large lecture halls, it is to your advantage to sit near the front. In the front, you will be able to see and hear the instructor—you can maintain eye contact and observe his or her facial expressions and nonverbal clues. If you sit in the back, you may become bored, and it is easy to be distracted by all of the people in front of you. Because of the people seated between you and the instructor, a feeling of distance is created. You may feel the instructor really is not talking to you.

Don't plan to just recopy your notes: Some students take each day's notes in a hasty, careless way and then recopy them in the evening. These students feel that recopying helps them review the information and think it is a good way to study. Actually, many times students don't get around to it or they copy them in a mechanical process that takes a lot of time but very little thought. Some students do find it helpful to redo notes on a computer but organize and condense them at the same time into a useable study tool.