

Effective Note-Taking in Class

**Source: The Learning Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Good lecture notes:

- Capture main points, helpful details and examples
- Structured strategically to allow for post-lecture annotation as well as later review
- Include pictures and diagrams to illustrate concepts visually
- Include your own questions, observations and other critical thoughts

	DONT	DO
Find Areas of Interest	Turn out dry topics; record irrelevant details	Ask "What is relevant to me?" and "How does this connect to the class themes?"
Judge Content, not cadence	Fixate on lecturer's speech patterns	Focus on Content, ignore delivery errors
Listen for Ideas, not facts	Listen for Facts, write down every word of the lecture	Listen for central themes and key Points. Summarize in Your Own Words
Be Flexible	Obsess about Form	Use strategies tailored to the different topics and lecture styles
Work at Listening	"Multi-Task" (aka Facebook and emails)	Work to Stay Alert, eliminate distractions (Tip: Try turning off app alerts, WiFi, etc.)

To Transcribe or Encode?

- Transcribing: copying the lecture content word for word.
 - This might be good when...?
- Encoding: listening, thinking and writing so as to understand the content.
 - This might be good when...?
- Research studies show that typed notes are more likely to be transcribed, not encoded. Transcribing is associated with less effective learning, so transcribed notes MUST be encoded after the lecture.
 - Think about annotating your notes after your lecture to get the most from them!

An effective note-taking flow: When to take Notes

- Before Lecture – From your readings
- During Lecture – Information covered by your teacher and fellow classmates
- After Lecture – Annotate and summarize what you just learned

Digital vs Handwritten Notes

But how do you choose the best method of note taking for you? Compare these options to see what is the best fit for you!

Digital	Handwritten
Faster than hand-writing	Easier to create diagrams and illustrations
Notes can be synced, copied, backed up, searched	Easier to annotate in the moment
Access to multiple online distractions	Can help with memorization

If Digital is for you, try these programs or apps for digital notes:

- Word
- Evernote
- Oenote
- Noteability
- Powerpoint
- Penultimate
- Scanbot
- Livescribe Pen

If Handwritten is for you, try these methods for handwritten notes:

Use document or paper to:

- Write or type important points or passages.
- Generate bulleted lists.
- Create structured outlines with numerals and letters. Summarize sections in your own words.

Cornell Style: Take notes on the right two-thirds of the page. List key words in the left column. Summarize the entire page in the space at the bottom

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License. You may reproduce it for non-commercial use if you use the entire handout and attribute the source: The Learning Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.