

Note-Taking Strategies

If you take notes during lectures, you may perform better than students who only listen. Taking notes in class can help you stay focused on and engaged in the material that's most likely to be on the exam.

Quick Tips

-  Read before class—Coming to class with background information for the lecture will make synthesizing session material easier.
-  Keep it short—Bullet points and summaries are easier to review later than complete sentences. Write down the main ideas and key terms, you can fill in the details later.
-  Use Visuals—Take a photo, draw a diagram, or connect ideas and concepts with a mind map.
-  Write questions—If you're unsure of something or think you missed a key point, write down your question. Find answers from the material, a study group, or professor after class.
-  Summarize—Take the time to summarize the lecture in your own words and add it to your notes.
-  Review—To retain the information from lectures, it's important to revisit your notes the same day as class and then again in small study sessions leading up to your exam.

Digital or Handwritten?

Studies show writing notes by hand allows for stronger retention of material. Keeping your laptop closed may also prevent distractions during the lecture. However, typing notes on your computer is faster and gives you a clean and easy way to reorganize notes and fill in missing material. So which method is best?

Discovering what works for you and for each class may take some testing. Which method allows you to engage best with the content in that particular course?

Perhaps a combination method is the key. Handwrite while in class, then use the digital transfer as your first round of review or take handwritten notes on a tablet.



Organizing Notes

After attending the first few lectures in each class and choosing the best note-taking method for yourself, make sure you're organized for the semester.

This means setting up folders in Google Drive, or notebooks in your digital notetaking system. Be sure to account for where you'll keep slides, handouts and SI notes as well.

Note-Taking Apps

Want a way to organize your digital notes? Try one of these apps.



OneNote



Notion



Goodnotes

More Ideas

Make an appointment with an Academic Support Resources Staff member for personalized note-taking strategies.



Academic Resources

Sears 402 • academicresources@case.edu