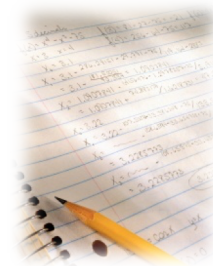


## Notetaking Tips

*Your notes from class along with your textbook are the two primary sources of information that you will need to learn in order to be successful in your class. Without good notes you will be at a definite disadvantage when it is time to demonstrate the amount and depth of your learning.*



### 1 LABEL YOUR NOTES AND KEEP THEM ORGANIZED

Label the course, date and topic-covered at the top of the page. This will help you find particular topics later in the semester. Keep notes from each class together for ease of access.

### 2 MAKE YOUR NOTES LEGIBLE

Try to be as neat as possible, remembering that these notes are a critical resource for your success in this class. You will need to study from these notes and not being able to decipher them will not help you later. Underline headings of the different topics covered by the instructor.

### 3 START TAKING NOTES AS SOON AS THE INSTRUCTOR STARTS TO SPEAK

Taking note of the instructor's introductory remarks will usually help you to anticipate what's ahead and be able to better organize your notes as you take them.

### 4 BE AGGRESSIVE

Good note taking is hard work. Sit where you can see and hear the instructor and the instructor can see and hear you (the T Zone). This will help you from daydreaming, texting, or doodling.

- ✓ Concentrate on what is being said; do more listening and thinking and less writing.
- ✓ If the lecture is not well organized, put down all main points and reorganize after class.
- ✓ If you miss a point, get it later from another student or the professor.
- ✓ Have a system for taking notes (Outline Form, Cornell Notes, etc.)
- ✓ Write your notes in your own words whenever possible.
- ✓ Leave blanks for missed information and fill it in later.
- ✓ Omit anecdotes and detailed illustrations.
- ✓ Copy important names, dates and formulas carefully.

## **5 TRY TO IGNORE DISTRACTIONS**

Although the person sitting in front of you may be texting and having a good time, try not to let that person distract you. The better and more complete your notes are the less time you will have to spend on them when studying.

## **6 HIGHLIGHT OR CIRCLE SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY YOU WILL HAVE TO LEARN**

In order to talk about a subject, your instructor will use the language of that subject. Circle those subject-specific words that you will need to learn the meaning of.

## **7 LEARN TO DIFFERENTIATE FACT FROM OPINION IN A LECTURE**

Label your professor's opinion as opinion so that you will not confuse it later with related fact. While your professor's is important it is unlikely that his/her opinion will be on the exam rather than the facts or data that he/she is discussing. Add an Abbreviation or Symbol for "opinion" to your Abbreviations & Symbols List (#8). Place your own reactions in [brackets] so as not to confuse them with the professor's opinion.

## **8 DEVELOP YOUR OWN ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS**

Develop your own abbreviations for words you use constantly (eg = for example; wo = without; w = with; > = greater than; ☺ = Opinion). In addition to these time savers, put an asterisk or ☆ by that material likely to be on a test and a "?" or Q next to something you do not understand.

## **9 ALWAYS TAKE NOTES ON DISCUSSIONS**

Good points always come up during a discussion. So, it is important to capture them as a part of your notes.

## **10 TRY TO ATTEND EVERY CLASS**

Remember, every class missed is an extra chapter or two of information you will have to try to digest and learn on your own. This increases your risk of not interpreting what you are reading consistently with your instructor and not making the necessary connections to fully understand what the instructor expects to you learn.

## Taking Notes for Science Class

The Cornell Note-taking system is an effective and efficient way to take notes for the sciences. The general idea is to divide your paper into two-columns. This system allows you to keep your notes organized, summarize the main points of a lecture quickly, and review for tests more efficiently.

The Cornell Note-taking method can be used while reading a textbook or during a lecture.

### How It Works:

On your paper, arrange columns in the following manner

<p>Cue Column: (2 &amp; 1/2 inches) Used to reduce ideas and facts to concise summaries</p>	<p>Note Taking Column: (6 &amp; 1/2 Inches) Used to record the lecture as fully and meaningfully as possible</p>
<p>Summary: One should leave space at the bottom of each sheet to allowing space to write a summary of the lecture</p>	

1. **Record:** During the lecture, use the note-taking column to record the lecture using telegraphic sentences. A telegraphic sentence is a sentence that expresses a straightforward, no-frills idea or action.
2. **Questions:** As soon after class as possible, formulate questions based on the notes in the right-hand column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, establish continuity, and strengthen memory. Also, the writing of questions sets up a perfect stage for exam-studying later.
3. **Recite:** Cover the note-taking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the question and cue column only, say aloud, in your own words, the answers to the questions, facts, or ideas indicated by the cue-words.
4. **Reflect:** Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: "What's the significance of these facts? What principle are they based on? How can I apply them? How do they fit in with what I already know? What's beyond them?"
5. **Review:** Spend at least ten minutes every week reviewing all your previous notes. If you do, you'll retain a great deal for current use, as well as, for the exam.

Here is an example: this is a page of notes from an online chemistry lecture.

Use this column to summarize what you are learning about.

Use this column to record the details of the lecture.

Chem 209  
July 5, 2012

What is a  
Lewis Dot  
diagram?

How to determine  
valence electrons

Steps for  
drawing dots

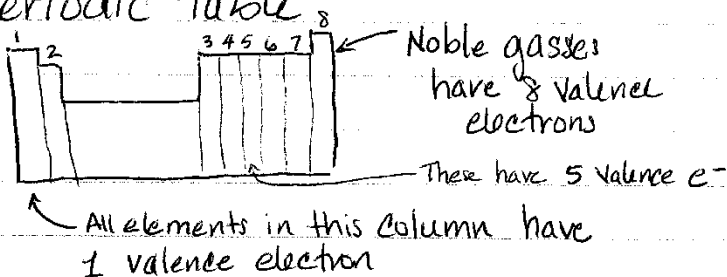
Example

## Lewis Dot Diagrams

• ← one dot to represent  
one valence electron  
Cs

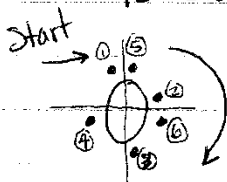
Element symbol  
for Cesium

You can determine valence  
electrons by placement in the  
periodic table



Step 1: Draw  $\oplus$ . Choose starting point. Go clock-wise or counter-cw

Step 2: Fill in one valence electron at a time until you return to starting position to double up.



Oxygen has 6  
valence electrons

## Notetaking

The first step to taking good notes in class is to come to class prepared. **Here are some steps you can take to improve your note-taking before class even begins:**

- Preview your text or reading assignments prior to lecture. Previewing allows you to identify main ideas and concepts that will most likely be discussed during the lecture.
- Look at your course syllabus so that you know the topic/focus of the class and what's going to be important to focus on.
- Briefly review notes from previous class sessions to help you situate the new ideas you'll learn in this class.
- Keep organized to help you find information more easily later. Title your page with the class name and date. Keep separate notebook sections or notebooks for each class and keep all notes for each class together in one space, in chronological order.

(Source: <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/effective-note-taking-in-class/>)

**Here are some practical steps you can try to improve your in-class note-taking:**

- If you are seeking conceptual information, focus on the *main points* the professor makes, rather than copying down the entire presentation or every word the professor says. Remember, if you review your notes after class, you can always fill in any gaps or define words or concepts you didn't catch in class.
- If you are learning factual information, transcribing most of the lecture verbatim can help with recall for short-answer test questions, but only if you study these notes within 24 hours.
- Record questions and thoughts you have or content that is confusing to you that you want to follow-up on later or ask your professor about.
- Jot down keywords, dates, names, etc. that you can then go back and define or explain later.
- Take visually clear, concise, organized, and structured notes so that they are easy to read and make sense to you later. See different formats of notes below for ideas.
- If you want your notes to be concise and brief, use abbreviations and symbols. Write in bullets and phrases instead of complete sentences. This will help your mind and hand to stay fresh during class and will help you access things easier and quicker after class. It will also help you focus on the main concepts.
- Be consistent with your structure. Pick a format that works for you and stick with it so that your notes are structured the same way each day.

(Source: <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/effective-note-taking-in-class/>)

## Digital Notetaking Apps/Programs

The following are several digital notetaking options for students who prefer to take electronic notes. While typing allows you to write more content, it doesn't require you to filter down to just the important information as hand-written notetaking does. Whatever your platform, ensure that you can write graphs, charts, and diagrams- and make sure they're organized!

The below suggestions are free and the majority are compatible across several platforms at once:

- [Milanote](#)
- [Zoho Notebook](#)
- [Evernote](#) (can import your hand-written notes there)
- [One Note](#) (also supports hand-written notes)
- [Paper](#)
- [Using Reminders on an Iphone](#) (if applicable)

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Source of "Taking Notes for Science Class":

<https://www.sccollege.edu/Departments/STEM/Documents/Handouts/Taking%20Notes%20Handout.pdf>