

Mount 101 Guide to: Taking Notes in Class

When you're writing notes, you're highlighting what you think is important information that you will need to know later. It can be hard to figure out what's important during a lecture and many people are tempted to write down everything the professor says. This isn't a good idea because not only is it incredibly difficult, it also means you're missing out on a lot of important information. Keep reading for some strategies on taking notes in class.

Before Class

- Check your course outline to see the topic and purpose of the class
- See how the topic relates to the learning objectives or outcomes
- Complete the assigned readings
- Write down 3-5 keywords or questions about the topic

During Class

- Focus on effective listening rather than writing everything down
- Take notes according to an organized format (e.g., Cornell notes, mind maps)
- Try different formats to find something that works for you
- Use your keywords and questions to stay focused
- Be alert for verbal and non-verbal cues
- Pay attention to the features of the lecture such as the introduction and conclusion
- Listen for repetition and elaboration of central ideas
- Don't panic if you missed something: make a note of it and follow up later
- If something isn't clear, ask your professor to explain, repeat, or elaborate

After Class

- Review your notes
- Summarize the class in a few sentences, a short paragraph, or a mind map (this is a great study tool)
- If something isn't clear, ask your professor. This is a great thing to discuss during office hours.