

TAKING NOTES IN CLASS

Note taking is a process that can be divided into three parts: observing, recording and reviewing.

Observing involves listening to the statements made by the teacher.

Recording means writing down important items.

Reviewing means reading your notes after class.

The following techniques may help you to be a better observer in class.

1. Be sure to complete any readings that were assigned for homework **before going to class**. That way, the lesson will be more of a review than an introduction. If the homework reading is difficult, **GO TO THE TECH CENTER LB212 AND USE KURZWEIL**. If you are still struggling, ask a tutor for help.

2. Bring a pen, pencil, notebook and any other materials you might need to class. It's also a good idea to bring the textbook.

3. Find a comfortable seat where you can easily see and hear the teacher. The best seats are front and center. It is harder to fall asleep, there are fewer distractions, the material on the board is easier to read and the instructor can see you more easily when you have a question.

4. Listen for repetition. Repetition is a signal that the material is important.

5. Pay attention to phrases such as: *the following three factors, the most important consideration, in addition to, on the other hand, in conclusion*.

6. Copy anything the teacher writes on the board or presents on the overhead projector.

7. Watch the professor. If he/she glances at his/her notes and then makes a point, it is a signal that the information is important. If the professor **READS** from his/her notes it is probably a potential test question.

8. Sometimes a teacher says outright that certain information will be on the exam. Write it down and put a star next to it.

9. Pay attention to how excited the teacher is about what is being said. If excitement is high, it is probably important.

Now it is time to take notes. Here are some ideas for more efficient recording.

Date each page and give it a title. If you have more than one page add a letter to the date. For example:

9/16/02A The Revolutionary War
(date) (topic)
9/16/02B Rev War
9/16/02C Rev War

Use the right hand pages of your notebook for class notes.

Use _____ for words that you miss.

Use ??? next to material you don't understand

Put a star next to points the teacher repeats or emphasizes, or use CAPITAL letters for points that are emphasized

Draw pictures or diagrams that help illustrate ideas

Leave space when the teacher moves on to a new topic.

Since you have already read the material before coming to class, you will use the left hand pages of your notebook for:

writing questions that came up during your reading

jotting down key words or any special vocabulary

writing definitions—you can find these in the Glossary of your book as well as in the actual text you are reading.

translating and keeping track of abbreviations you use.

If you just don't "get it", try:

reading the information in a book other than your text.

discussing it after class with your teacher, or a classmate, or

participating in a study group, or working with a tutor at the Learning Center

Aim to make your notes complete, organized and legible. They are only useful if you can understand them.