



# Note Taking Tips

(Using the “GREAT” notes method)

GREAT notes

Get Ready  
wRite  
Edit  
Ask questions  
Test yourself

**Get Ready Phase:** Set the stage

- Complete all written homework assignments before class
- Complete all reading homework assignments before class
- Bring the right materials
- Browse previous notes prior to class, anticipate a “pop” quiz
- Sit front and center
- Prepare yourself to be focused

**wRite Phase:** Note taking

- Include key information  
Ex. main ideas, facts, details, examples & definitions
- Listen for instructor’s cues of importance, ex. repetition, enthusiasm
- Use abbreviations and symbols that you understand
- Write only on the front side of the paper

**Edit Phase:** Make notes useable after class

- Clean up after class, ex. check spelling, ideas, dates, etc.
- Fill in the gaps
- Use the back side of the paper for:
  - Vocabulary words
  - Make up your own examples
  - Draw charts, pictures, diagrams
  - Add new notes from your textbook
  - Write down questions for your instructor

**Ask Questions Phase:** Put yourself in the instructor’s role

- Design sample test questions
- Change passive learning to active learning
- “Teaching is what occurs outside the head. Learning is what occurs inside the head.”

**Test Yourself Phase:** Move info to long term memory

- Can only be done if/after questions are made
- Read the questions and recite your answers aloud

## Outline example:

- I. First main topic
  - A. Subtopic
    1. Detail
    2. Detail
  - B. Subtopic
    1. Detail
    2. Detail
- II. Second main topic
  - A. Subtopic
    1. Detail
    2. Detail
  - B. Subtopic
    1. Detail
    2. Detail

## Miscellaneous Tips:

- Sit in a class room location with minimal distractions
- Use a three-ring binder so you can add handouts
- Copy down information from the white/chalk board or overhead
- Leave blank spaces (if you use both sides of your paper)
- Take notes in pencil or erasable pen so you can erase easily
- Try highlighting, but use sparingly
- Participate in class discussions
- Notice when you are off track and refocus
- Type up your notes on the computer after class
- Make eye contact with the instructor and use good posture, etc.
- Compare notes with a classmate, if possible, right after class
- Experiment with formats and use what works for you – Use a tape recorder and FYI to your instructor as a courtesy

Adapted from Red Rocks Community College website